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THE CONFESSOR.

A NOVEL.

“ The renegade,
On whose base brutal nature unredeem'd
Even black apostacy itself could stamp
No deeper reprobation.”

SOUTHEY'S BODERICK.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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THE CONFESSOR.

CHAPTER I.

QUEEN. And must we be divided? must we part?

K. RICH. Aye, hand from hand, my love, and heart from heart.

KING RICHARD II.

MEANWHILE there were lonely hearts and weary spirits at Oxford, awaiting the tidings on which, for the most part, all their hopes depended. The fortunes of some, the dearest affections of others, were staked in this mortal struggle, and, agonising as was the suspense which intervened between each despatch, even more agonising was the gush of feeling which frequently followed its publication.

The residence of her Majesty and the Court

at Oxford had rendered that place the resort of a great proportion of the ladies of birth and distinction whose husbands or other relatives were enlisted in the Royal cause; and, on the rare occasion of the arrival of a post from the army, all hearts beat faster,—for almost inevitably to some amongst their number was dealt the sharp, keen blow of sudden bereavement, and nought remained to the widowed and the fatherless other than the faint consolation that those they loved had died with honour.

To add to the perplexities of the party, the situation of the Court at Oxford was by no means a secure one; and had the Parliamentary troops, as was once apprehended, advanced upon the city, the situation of the Queen, and of the numerous adherents who made that place their rendezvous, must have been very precarious.

But it was not the apprehension of personal danger, influencing many around her, that shadowed the brow of the Lady Katharine Wentworth with a deeper cast of care than it had ever worn before. From the time of Lyndesay's departure for the siege of Gloucester, her spirits had never regained their accustomed cheerfulness;

and the anxiety with which she watched for tidings from the army had drawn upon her many a stroke of misdirected raillery; the Prince's assiduities and avowed admiration having given occasion to no less jealousy than remark.

By Katharine herself his homage had else been totally forgotten in the far deeper musings which Lyndesay's parting words had awakened within her. In them she found the key to his whole conduct, and, as she fondly told herself, its complete justification, and even in this thought there was happiness. On the other hand, he had gone away deceived, believing in her desertion of him for another; and how should she make known to him the truth?—how explain all that in the simplicity of womanly trust and the innocence of conscious rectitude, she had never before dreamed could need explanation? but which, as she now feared, had destroyed his faith in her for ever. To write to him were not maidenly, even had the state of public communication afforded her a reasonable hope that any letter, save an official despatch, would reach the hand for which it was destined. Whether even he would return to Oxford she knew not, and his farewell to herself

had, at any rate, been final. And then came back upon her memory the tone in which he had uttered those cherished assurances of unaltered love, and it sounded as the knell of a happiness gone by for ever.

Still she eagerly searched every despatch for the most trifling mention of the one loved name, and not without success: for during the siege of Gloucester, the reports of the commanding officer contained honourable notice of his conduct on more than one occasion, when a sally from the enemy had occasioned an action. On the raising of the siege, a faint hope arose that he might return, but soon it was overruled, and the army, with which Lyndesay still continued, marched eastward. At length came the tidings of the fatal battle of Newbury, and then,—all was over, and the secret of her heart must remain buried there for ever.

Weeks and months wore away: the army returned into winter quarters, and the King again took up his residence at Oxford, to which place he summoned a parliament. The hopes of the royal party seemed for a while to revive, and in the rapid succession of events of overwhelming

importance, private griefs could hardly demand sympathy.

In Katharine's sorrow such sympathy was impossible, for none of those around her knew the hidden canker at the heart which ate away the bloom from the cheek, and the lustre from the eye, and which took from the step its lightness. Ever calm and tranquil, her demeanour excited less remark than when, in the anxiety of suspense, it had exhibited at intervals a certain degree of restlessness; for now she *knew the worst*, and deep but certain sorrow is ever less demonstrative than feverish suspense. The bullet that carries death leaves but little external trace of nature's struggles, but the probing of a wound brings agony which overpowers the strongest fortitude.

On his return to Oxford, the King had used in his bearing towards the Lady Katharine even more than his accustomed indulgence; and amid the oppressive cares and harrassing importunities which now multiplied upon him from all quarters, his eyes were frequently fixed on the blanched and sunken cheeks of the fair young maid of honour, with an earnestness that startled her, and

that called up the quick, faint blush of consciousness. But the name she loved he had never uttered in her hearing, and in her sorrow she believed none shared.

Had our heroine's calamity been of a less engrossing nature, the adventures both of the Court and the country, during this winter, might have furnished sufficient subject for distraction. The long course of suspicion and doubt which had shadowed the royal mind, with regard to the fidelity of the Duke of Hamilton, had, as we have seen, been brought to a crisis, by the discovery of his former treasonable correspondence with the enemies of the nation and King. As this offence, however, had been included in the general pardon, announced by the act of oblivion, it was not until the Duke, in conjunction with his brother Laverick, had given, at this time, public and unequivocal proofs of disloyalty and treachery in his transactions with the parliament of Edinburgh, that Charles at length found himself compelled to treat him as an offender. On his re-appearance at Oxford, the Duke of Hamilton was immediately placed under arrest, and was removed for confinement to the castle of Pen-

dennis, in Cornwall, where he long remained a prisoner.

Meanwhile, his noble rival, the Earl of Montrose, weary of delays, and burning with impatience to possess the royal sanction which should arm him with authority to raise the bold standard of the Highlands, in the cause to which he had so solemnly devoted himself, took the resolution, so characteristic of his chivalrous spirit, of passing through the tract of country occupied by the hostile armies, whether English or Scotch, and himself seeking an interview with the King at Oxford.

It was there that he first learned, with bitter grief, that his youthful friend had fallen at Newbury; and although, on his return to the North—which he accomplished with great difficulty, since Charles was unable to afford him a single troop for the protection of his person—he carried with him the King's commission, as Lieutenant-General of all his Majesty's forces raised, or to be raised, in Scotland, and the additional honour of a marquissate, yet were private griefs busy at his heart; and when he raised the royal standard at Dumfries, and pledged himself to restore the

throne or perish, deeply did he feel that henceforth his hopes lay but in his commission and his sword.

To Margaret Hamilton his visit had been one continued and painful struggle. There were not wanting persons who represented the disgrace of her uncle, as attributable to the influence of Montrose; but though Margaret was well aware that the two noblemen bore each other no goodwill, she had too long witnessed the strong and mysterious power exercised by the late confessor over the mind of her relative, not to become convinced that there existed reasons why Hamilton should fear betrayal, to which, on their detection, Montrose's representations would be but auxiliary evidence.

Convinced, therefore, that her uncle had throughout acted a traitorous part, Margaret witnessed with comparative indifference his disgrace and imprisonment. But by many in the Court far other feelings were attributed to her, and her careful seclusion of herself during Montrose's presence at Oxford, together with the inflexible tone with which she persisted in denying the request of her lover to bid her a last farewell,

were laid to the account of a just resentment against the author of the Duke of Hamilton's disgrace.

But fraught with calamity as were these unhappy times to every individual whose fate was interwoven with their incidents, for none did they weave so complicated a web of trial and suffering as for Charles himself. Day by day his spirit was chafed by the dissensions of his officers and the divisions of his council; while between the one and the other there existed an established jealousy and opposition.

The parliament which had met at his summons at Oxford, weak in its councils, and without power to enforce its own decrees, acted rather as a burden than a support. In order to meet the exigence for the supply of money and troops, the King, on a pacific accommodation with the Irish rebels, had withdrawn a part of his forces from that country. This act of necessity, to which his own rebellious subjects had driven him, was represented as a betrayal of the interests of the kingdom; and men in arms against their sovereign, with their swords at his breast, reproached him with perfidy for calling to his aid the defence

prepared against more distant, but less dangerous, offenders of the same class.

His private and domestic miseries were no less aggravated. In proportion to the increasing inability of the King to confer favours and distinctions worthy the acceptance of those who merited them, was augmented the rapacity and presumption of his partisans, who, rating their services as a personal obligation to his Majesty, esteemed themselves, each one, aggrieved if he met not with particular reward. Against all these difficulties and sore trials, however, the manly spirit of Charles supported itself and struggled on; but a blow was now to be struck which went much nearer to his heart—it was his approaching separation from the Queen.

The military operations of the winter had materially diminished the confidence of the royalist party, since in almost every instance of collision they had been left at disadvantage. The powerful force with which the Scots had entered England overawed the north, and the recalled royal troops from Ireland were speedily defeated by Fairfax. The eastern counties were kept in check by General Cromwell, who was now

rapidly ascending to the summit of popular fame on the shoulders of his bold and well-disciplined Ironsides. To crown all, early in the spring an action took place at Alvesford, in which, by the defeat of the King's party, the counties in the south and west were left almost deprived of protection; and the fears which had before been entertained, that a parliamentary army should advance to the siege of Oxford, were, with great reason, renewed, and Essex and Manchester threatened to meet under its gates.

In this emergency, Queen Henrietta Maria acted not as became a daughter of Henry the Fourth, a child of the same soil that had produced a Margaret of Anjou, or a Jeanne de Montfort, and which in later times had displayed in the person of her actual Queen, "fair Austria's mournful flower," an heroic example of female constancy and courage.*

The situation of Henrietta—for she was within

* It is a remarkable fact in English history up to this time, that all the Sovereigns who have been deposed by violence, have been united to Princesses of the Royal Families of France: Edward II. to Isabella, the "she-wolf of France;" Richard II. to the young Isabel de Valois; Henry VI. to Margaret of Anjou; Charles I. to Henrietta Maria of Bourbon.

a few months of again becoming a mother—might plead some excuse for the precipitancy with which, in opposition to the entreaties of Charles and the policy of his ministers, she insisted upon quitting her adopted country, her children's just inheritance, at a time when her flight must contribute to the serious discouragement of her party, as well as on abandoning a husband whose affection for her knew no bounds, exactly at the moment when, more especially, her post was at his side; when the world's reverses were thickening around him, and he could look to none with unlimited faith and trust, save to the wife of his bosom.

At length the day arrived which was to witness the departure of the Queen and her attendants for Exeter, where she was to make some sojourn previously to embarking, in case of any alarm, for France. It was a lovely April morning, and the brilliant sun, and the bright green hue of nature, all spoke of hope; and, as in obedience to a summons from her mistress, the Lady Katharine Wentworth proceeded, after completing her preparations for the journey, to join the Queen in the departure chamber, she passed along the corridor once before mentioned, from which was a

descent by steps to the garden ; and, as she stood a moment, and contemplated the budding trees and the springing flowers, and as the genial breath of the spring passed across her brow, a feeling of peace which she had not known for many months took possession of her ; and, though she could not be said to *hope*, yet she became suddenly sensible of a more joyous *trust* that He, who so “watered the earth,” and made it “bring forth and bud,” could, if it were His will, cause flowers to spring up even in the desert of her own existence.

“Presentiments ! they judge not right,
Who deem that ye from open light
Retire in fear of shame—

How oft from you, derided Powers,
Comes Faith that in auspicious hours
Builds castles, not of air :
Bodings unsanctioned by the will,
Flow from your visionary skill,
And teach us to beware.

But who can fathom your intents ?
Number their signs or instruments ?
A rainbow—a sunbeam.
A subtle smell that Spring unbinds,
Dead pause abrupt of midnight winds,
An echo, or a dream.”

When Katharine reached the presence chamber, she found the King and Queen alone. She would have retired, but the Queen called to her, "Ah, mignonne! thou hast already kept us waiting, and we shall hardly reach our first station before nightfall: our ladies are already to horse, and our coach is in attendance."

Much shocked at having so far transgressed her duty, Katharine was prompt in offering apologies for the delay, but the King interrupted her:

"We, at least, cannot blame you, my child; you have afforded us a few additional moments of our dear wife's society."

"It may be that we shall soon return to glad you with it again," said Henrietta, as she committed to Katharine the task of adjusting her travelling-cloak. "Ah, would that your Majesty were about to accompany us!"

"I have other duties, Henrietta;—and by these realms I must stand or fall. As I have inherited them from my ancestors, so will I transmit them to my son, or perish in the attempt. If I know no tie save that which binds me to

thee,—then,——but time presses. One kiss, my love, and then—farewell !”

But his fortitude failed him. He threw his arms around his wife, and sobs, as of a bursting heart, broke from his bosom. The Queen, too, wept ; but at length recovering, she said,—

“ Nay, my Lord, cheer yourself. See how miserable we make this pauvre petite Katharine. You, at least, m’amie, need not to mourn, for you have no husband to leave, and any change must be for the better from this gloomy place.”

“ God grant those pale cheeks may regain their hue !” said Charles. “ Alas ! she also is not ignorant of sorrow !”

This was said in the peculiar tone which to Katharine’s ear always seemed to carry an allusion to her secret. But reply or explanation was needless. In silence Charles led away his wife to her coach ; then convulsively pressing her hand to his lips, he turned away, and they never met again.

Throughout the bitter remnant of his unhappy career, perhaps the persecuted Monarch never endured aught equalling the agony of that moment !

The maids of honour, and other ladies attendant upon the Queen were mounted upon horse-

back, the Queen herself travelling in a coach. Their retinue was slightly guarded by a troop of horse, and the party were to proceed by short journeys, to avoid fatigue or ill consequences to her Majesty.

So much time had been lost in adieus, and afterwards in arranging the order of the cavalcade, and in distributing the numerous accommodations which so large a party of female travellers needed, that little progress was made the first day, and sunset, when it fell, found them but on the frontiers of Berkshire, on their road to Bristol. The evening was calm and beautiful, though somewhat chill, and to enjoy its freshness, apart from the buzz of human voices, the Lady Katharine Wentworth and Marguerite d'Amville lingered in the rear of the cavalcade. In silence for the most part each one "chewed the cud of sweet and bitter fancy," but occasionally a remark passed between them.

"Does not this scene remind you, dear Margaret, of other times, when you and I were free to wander through the fields together as we listed, secure from harm, and all seemed happy round us, and England was at peace? Now, in truth,

we seem more like state prisoners than aught else; and even our beloved mistress, the Queen of the land, is obliged to steal away as if she were a felon. Our King has no power to protect her over his own territory. Surely, Margaret, this 'merry England' has become one vast prison!"

"She has deserted the faith of her forefathers," returned Margaret, "and has yet to suffer retribution for her connivance in the murder of the sweetest Queen that ever lived."

"Ah! dear Margaret, that is worthy of Father Jacopo. But surely, even yourself, or he, would exempt our Sovereign from this fearful retribution! And Mary Stuart's blood will hardly be required at the hands of her grandson."

"He, too, has wandered from the true fold. But enough of this. It is strange, dearest Kate, how to-day the reminiscences of other times come across both your mind and my own. You have mentioned Father Jacopo, and though I know him to be in Rome, since he told me he should retire thither on leaving England, yet, by a most extraordinary illusion, I have fancied that I beheld him several times during this day: not in priestly garments, as formerly, but in the

ordinary puritan dress. Once in the court-yard of the house where we halted for refreshment at noon, I saw this person standing amongst a group of idlers who watched our dismounting—and again he crossed our path on horseback this afternoon.”

“You must have been misled by a remarkable likeness,” said Katharine. “Did the individual you speak of appear to recognise you?”

“He did not so much as look at me, but on the contrary, Kate, I observed that on both of these occasions his eyes were intently fixed on you.”

“Indeed!” replied the Lady Katharine, struck with more apprehension than she liked to express. In truth, during the residence of the Dominican at the Court, the fixed and eager gaze with which he had at all times regarded herself when chance threw him into her path, had rendered him an object of extreme terror and aversion to her. She added softly, after a short pause, as if to herself—“I believe he a’ways hated me.”

“Hated you? oh no! he only pitied your heretical darkness, and——”

“To the rescue!—onward!—to the rescue of

the Queen !—charge !” shouted several voices at once ; and in breathless haste the loitering troop of cavaliers dashed forwards to the spot where was situated the Queen’s carriage.

It was already surrounded, and its further progress arrested, by a body of well-armed men in the buff coat and cuirass of the parliamentary troops, who received the fierce onset of the Queen’s guard with coolness and intrepidity, acting rather upon the defensive than as attempting to carry the day themselves.

A kind of light skirmish ensued, continuing for about a quarter of an hour, at the end of which time the puritan soldiers, apparently not thinking the prize worth their further contending, sounded to retreat, and the cavaliers, satisfied with having placed the Queen’s person in safety, attempted not to pursue.

So tumultuous had been the affray, that none had had leisure or opportunity to regard the cries which resounded from the rear of the party, where rode the two young maids of honour. On the alarm, which had concentrated the force of their guard around the person of the Queen, they had been, of course, entirely deprived of the pro-

tection of the escort. Quickening their pace, they attempted to join the main party, but the effort was fruitless. Margaret's bridle was seized, and an attempt was made to pull her from her horse, by three of the soldiers, who issued from a barn or shed by the side of the road. But no sooner had she uttered a scream for help, than another person appeared, who, with a loud oath, calling out to the soldiers, "Fools! you have the wrong one, let her pass,"—himself sprang towards Katharine's horse, and turning it away from the road they were pursuing, led it, regardless of her entreaties, into the shed hard by.

The face of this man, who seemed to command the others, was not visible, owing to the construction of his helmet, which had a visor, or mouth-piece, as such were termed. He was speedily joined by his companions, who civilly desired Katharine to dismount,—a request she had no means of disputing with success. She therefore allowed herself to be assisted from her horse, and immediately a bandage was tied across her eyes, and she was lifted upon another horse, belonging to one of the troopers, which had been furnished with a pillion evidently for the accom-

modation of a female. To her tears and remonstrances, an obstinate silence was preserved, and she was at length obliged to resign herself, weeping, to the fate which seemed inevitable. Soon the whole party left the shed, and after traversing a few miles, they came to a hall; and Katharine gathered, from what passed between them, that they were waiting for their companions, who had been engaged with the royal guard.

Though free from selfishness, Katharine could not forbear the wish that some companion in captivity might be added to her society, on the arrival of the remainder of the troop; but she silently and fervently prayed for the escape of the Queen. When, however, the tramping of numerous horses announced to her the approach of the soldiers, she could gather nothing further of their proceedings, from the remarks which reached her ears, than a fair presumption that her royal mistress, at least, was not their prisoner. Whether any other of the train had become so, she had no means of judging while deprived of the use of her sight, though, at times, she could have believed that she detected the

accents of a female voice amongst the rough tones of the troopers. The word of command was given by the soldier—or officer, as it appeared—who rode the horse on which also Katharine had been placed, and, without loss of time, the troop proceeded on their route.

They continued to progress with the utmost speed for about fifteen miles, when the Lady Katharine became aware that they had entered a village, and were about to halt. By this time it was completely dark, and between terror, fatigue, and cold, the functions alike of mind and body were nearly suspended. Almost insensible, she was lifted from her horse and carried into a house, where she was immediately conveyed into an upper chamber, and when the bandage was taken from her eyes, and she had recovered a little, she found herself lying on a couch, with no other individual present excepting her attendant Alice, who was kneeling by her side, and using every restorative to effect her revival. Thankful beyond expression for the presence even of her maid, Katharine's first emotion was to throw herself upon her neck, and burst into an uncontrollable fit of weeping.

In answer to the questions which she reiterated when somewhat tranquillised, Alice pointed to the half-open door, where were placed two sentinels who kept strict watch, and glanced from time to time into the interior of the apartment. The view was dismal enough, bespeaking as it did that they were close prisoners, strictly guarded, and almost denied the privacy of their own chamber. But in order to counteract the melancholy impression which this sight had made upon her mistress, the waiting-woman added, in a low, subdued tone,—

“Be comforted, my lady, we shall come to no harm, for, strange to say, I have discovered in the captain of this troop, whom they call Jacobs, an old acquaintance and friend, the Dominican. I knew him by his voice, for he has not as yet unhelmeted.”

With a shudder, and an almost inaudible groan, Katharine fell back upon the couch. Hitherto her fears had been of a vague nature, and she had not known what character to assign to them. Supposing that the Queen had been the primary object of the attack, she had imagined her own capture to be of inferior importance, and conse-

quently hoped that she had nothing worse to dread than a short captivity from which the next exchange of prisoners might rescue her; a situation sufficiently painful, but which did not banish all hope. The information of Alice, however, seemed to open a gulf beneath her feet, and revealed to her the extremity of her own personal danger.

For the first time she recalled the remarks of Margaret respecting the person whom she had noticed during their day's journey. The words of the Captain himself, too, as he led her horse away, recurred, and now assumed a more dangerous personal import. She wondered all this had not struck her before. She had then fallen into the hands of the wily priest whom she had ever held in such extreme horror,—a sentiment she suspected he had discovered, and would avenge in an inquisitorial endeavour to compel her acquiescence in his creed, by force or fraud,—else what could be his design in thus singling out herself? Struck to the heart with terror and despair, she remained speechless.

Soon she had occasion to rouse herself, and call to her aid all the energy and self-possession of

which she was mistress; for Captain Jacobs, having divested himself of his helmet and riding accoutrements, and swallowed a liberal potation of sack to obviate the inconveniences of his cold evening's ride, now appeared in person at the door of the apartment.

There was no longer any difficulty in recognising him; and Katharine's heart sank within her as she met the same bold gaze which had startled her from under the cowl in hours of security, and surrounded by protectors—now fixed upon her when in his power, as a lawless rebel, and herself—save the presence of Alice—alone.

She did not, however, suffer her emotion to betray itself, but rose, and coldly bowing to her visitor, seemed to await his address.

“Well—my pretty mistress! I hope you've found comfortable quarters here. I ordered them to prepare the best.”

“Prisoners, sir, have no choice as to accommodation.”

“But your accommodation, fair Mistress Katharine, may perhaps depend more upon your own choice than you think for. Do you know me?”

As he said this, he advanced a step or two nearer to Katharine, apparently to give her the opportunity of recognising him, and peered into her face with a cunning, yet awkward, expression of familiarity.

Katharine did not move, but she drew herself to her full height as she answered,—

“Permit me, sir, to put a question to you before I answer yours. I would know in what light I am to view my situation. Am I to consider myself as detained here on the footing of a prisoner?”

“Why that, I take it, pretty one, rests with yourself,” returned the Captain.

“My friends will pay a ransom, or his Majesty will effect an immediate exchange, if that be the condition of my liberty.”

“No, no, my mistress! We’ve limed the bird, and we’ll take pretty good care not to give her wing again. When you gain your liberty, it will be on rather a different condition from these.”

“And the alternative, if I reject the condition?” said Katharine firmly.

“The Tower of London, fair lady; and I can promise you that once fairly within those old

dark walls, it's no such easy matter to get out again. I fancy one Mistress Arabella Stuart, and a namesake of your's, one Catharine Grey, that I've heard tell of, would have blessed their stars to escape from it on the condition I offer you."

Indignant at the insolent tone of this speech, Katharine answered briefly and haughtily,—

"Name it."

Although Jacobs had maintained throughout an impudent familiarity of expression, yet it was evident that even his hardy assurance was in some degree subjected to the influence of Katharine's high tone and lofty bearing. He had sought the interview in the expectation that her woman's heart had failed her, and that, overcome with terror and apprehension, she had not dared to assert her opposition to his will.

Instead of this mood of tame submission, however, he beheld her armed with a spirit and resolution of which he had not supposed her capable; assuming the office of catechist with the tone and manner of a superior; giving way to no womanly weakness, but with prompt good sense and presence of mind endeavouring to

realize the position in which she was placed; while he, her captor and jailer, stood before her in the attitude of a dependant and apologist, insensibly bowing before a dignity which he could not comprehend.

It was the sense of this humiliating influence which caused him, on the Lady Katharine's uttering her last question, to hesitate considerably in answering; and when he did so, his awkward and shame-faced manner betrayed his confusion. At length he stammered out,—

“Why, you see, pretty Mistress Katharine, if you leave the Tower at all—it must be as my wife!”

Amidst all the fears which had assailed her, the possibility of such a proposal had never occurred to the mind of Katharine; and she remained standing, stupified with wonder, regarding the speaker with a kind of bewilderment.

Encouraged by her silence, he advanced towards her. This movement recalled the necessity of self-possession. Retreating a few steps, she waved her hand towards the door, and calmly said, “Leave my presence, Master Jacobs,—and instantly.”

Strange to say, so strong is the spell of unarmed innocence, so imposing its majesty, the man Jacobs mechanically retreated towards the door; looking behind him, however, as he did so, after the manner of a cur driven from his stolen morsel; and continuing to address her.

“Ha, my proud dame! we shall see how long these flights continue. I’ve the means of forcing your compliance, my mistress, if you won’t take fair speeches. I’ve the General’s word to grant me the very first petition I ask—General Cromwell’s, I mean; and I’ll be bound he’ll soon find the means to make you bend that falcon crest of yours,—for I’ll ask my wife of him.”

This was uttered rather in an under-tone, as if addressed partly to himself, partly to Katharine; but when he reached the door, the Captain turned, and casting a fearful glance at his captive, he added fiercely,—

“No young Lyndesay, my mistress, to free you this time. *He died by this hand at Newbury.*”

He shook his clenched fist as he said this, and retired. And well it was that he did so, for his last words had achieved the triumph which the

previous scene had been incapable of effecting. A pang shot across the frame of poor Katharine: the colour left her lips, and strength forsook her limbs; and, faint and powerless, she sank into a chair.

She had little time given her to recover. Almost immediately the sentinels announced that the evening worship was about to commence, and that she was expected to join in it.

Without power, or indeed much inclination to resist, Katharine submitted in silence to the guidance of the two soldiers, who guarded her with as much vigilance as though she had been a state prisoner; and descended the stairs towards the lower room. On entering this, she encountered a scene, which, even in her forlorn state, presented features sufficiently interesting to attract her attention.

At a table in the centre, the light of the lamp falling full upon his sharp, pale face, sat the Rev. Shimei Haman (for to the abode of this worthy gentleman again our story has led us); his hands clasped together, and his dull eyes turned upwards till they seemed almost strained in the effort, in the attitude of prayer. Around the

room were placed on seats in close proximity, as many of the soldiers or inferior officers of the troop as could be crowded into the space, two seats alone having been left vacant for the accommodation of the Lady Katharine and her waiting-maid.

The auditory, who were engaged, like their minister, in "seeking the Lord," had adopted precisely the attitude and gesture of which he afforded the model; and so fixed and statue-like was their appearance, that Katharine for a moment doubted whether the cropped and closely-shaved figures, all so much alike, were real creatures of flesh and blood, or painted effigies. She was presently relieved from all doubt on the subject, by the hurricane of sighs and deep groans, and other signs of vast internal emotion which greeted her ears as she moved towards one of the vacant seats.

There was one individual, however, in the assembly, who did not appear to consider her a being too much of earth to be gazed at; and the bright eyes of Lilius Haman, far from abjuring the contemplation of terrestrial things, met those of the Lady Katharine with a peculiar expression, half-comic, half-vexed, which was not diminished

when the latter, having taken her seat, Captain Jacobs got up, and so placed himself near her as to prevent even the interchange of glances between the two young girls.

It was, however, something to Katharine to recognise the presence of her old playmate at all, and the look which had passed between them imparted to her a feeling of security she had not known before.

When the first act of the drama had concluded, and the eyes of the company were suffered to resume their natural position, the Rev. Shimei commenced his exordium. He was, it must be remarked, entirely unprovided with even so much as a copy of the sacred Scriptures to assist his inspirations. But memory and invention were fertile, and the attention which was awakened by his first words, "How art thou fallen from Heaven, O Lucifer, son of the Morning! How art thou cast down, thou that didst weaken nations!" was not diminished, as he proceeded, to the satisfaction of all present, with one or two exceptions, to demonstrate that these words were originally written with no other view than to denote the present abasement and humiliation of

King Charles, whose power, now about to be destroyed, should give place to the kingdom of the saints, whereof those present, with their brethren, should constitute the cabinet council. In the mean time, he commented severely upon the recent escape of the Queen; though the soldiers, it was believed, had acted according to orders; and comparing her to Jezebel, he reiterated fearfully the words, "Throw her down!" concluding his Christian exhortation on the duty of giving no quarter, by a truly charitable application of the sacred text, "Cursed be he that keepeth back his sword from blood."

Immediately on the Rev. Shimei's ceasing to speak, some one present gave out the first line of a psalm, and there followed a wild burst of shrill and discordant singing, in which strength of lungs apparently was the test of devotion; for the few good voices and correct ears were completely overpowered, and the chaos of sound which ensued would, at any other time, have overcome the gravity of Katharine Wentworth. But her heart was too heavy for mirth, and, entirely overpowered by the reverberation of harsh tones, she buried her face in her hands.

When the psalm had ceased, a slight movement commenced amongst the assembly; and it was in the confusion consequent upon this, and before the Lady Katharine had raised her head, as expecting another verse, that she heard a voice close to her ear. It uttered but three words, but they were clear and distinct, and their import could not be mistaken — “Lady, he lives!”

The Lady Katharine started, and looked round. On one side of her remained the ever-vigilant Captain Jacobs, and on the other one of the soldiers who had acted as sentinel. The latter was, however, in close colloquy with Lilius Haman, touching the payment of a kiss which he affirmed she owed him. Some said that this salute was the promised reward for the opportunity of a moment's speech with Katharine, but which the young lady refused to pay. Again she darted her expressive eyes on the Lady Katharine; and Jacobs, who appeared suspicious of all communication between the maidens, instantly ordered the guard to convey the prisoner to her chamber.

Once more there, and having availed herself of

all the bolts and bars with which doors of that period were encumbered, as well as of a key which Lilius had contrived to slip into the hand of Alice as a security against intrusion, the lady desired her maid to rest, and herself revolved the extraordinary and numerous vicissitudes of this day. In the morning free, and attached to a royal retinue, but widowed in heart, and with no hope of future happiness; now, at night, she found herself a captive, in the power of an unprincipled and dangerous man, who had evidently offered her a premeditated act of violence, and that not the first, since his expressions proved him the same person who had attacked her three years before on the evening of her parting from Lyndesay, and who, doubtless, was the author, also, of the other calamities of that night. In this man's power she found herself, with the threat of rigorous imprisonment in a state-fortress—a threat, however, which presented to her an idea of paradise, as an exchange from *his* custody.

With all this, the Lady Katharine had heard that Lyndesay lived; for to none other could the words of Lilius refer; and through all the diffi-

culties and perils that surrounded her, hope again beat high; and as she watched the stars out, and heard the last lingering sounds of the soldiers' revel beneath and around her, a refreshing sleep overtook her, with a peace to which she had long been a stranger. And when, on the dawn of morning, rude voices awakened her, and a harsh summons reached her to be in readiness, the soldiers themselves—all blunted as were their sympathies—were struck with the blooming cheek and brightened eye, the cheerful gait and elastic movement, with which she mounted her horse, and, putting him to his briskest pace, surrounded by her guard, proceeded towards the metropolis, to take up her abode in the Tower.

CHAPTER II.

Cromwell, I charge thee, throw away ambition ;
By that sin fell the angels."

HENRY VIII.

THE sun which gilded the bright armour and glittering weapons of the military troop which now bore away to London in charge of the Lady Katharine Wentworth, also shone on that morning through the humble lattice of an obscure and solitary cottage, or rather hut, situated on the most barren part of a heath, not many miles from the house where she had rested during the last night. In one corner of the apartment which was cheered by his beams, falling on whitewashed walls and rough oaken furniture, was a low couch, on which rested the feeble and emaciated figure of a young man, whose appearance denoted that he had but recently passed that fatal barrier

in which nature holds with a tottering hand the balance of life and death; or that it was still impending over him. He turned his eyes frequently in the direction of the door, as if expecting the entrance of some one, and amused himself meantime with silently watching the active movements of the uncouth being who was preparing the morning meal.

Soon a figure entered the low door, but apparently not the person whom the young man had expected; for he started up in surprise, and exclaimed,—

“Ninon!”

She advanced in silence to the side of the couch, and looked earnestly into his face; then, taking his hand, and feeling the pulse, she said,—

“He knows me, and the danger is past. God be praised! I knew he would not die.”

“Good mother! have you then been here before?”

“Have I *not*, Albert? Who has watched thee by day and by night, thinkest thou, during the weeks and months of mortal struggle through which thy life has hung upon a thread? Though I told them that thy destiny was yet unfulfilled, yet did all despair but myself. From thy own

lips in thy delirium I heard the words which form the spell of thy nativity, and I knew thou couldst not die. I have news for thee."

"First tell me, Ninon, if thou canst, what has become of my friend?"

"Master Howard will re-enter before long, but I have other webs to weave. The Lady Katharine Wentworth journeys to London this day, a prisoner in the hands of the most desperate and hardened villain of the many who now infest the land. I go to join her, and to protect her by my presence till secure beyond his reach. I suspect his designs, but he will not dare to refuse my company."

"We must rescue her,—Pierre and myself,—we are strong. In what direction do they travel?"

"Peace—foolish boy! *thou* strong! and the shadow of death but just passed over thee. I tell thee, this man is in my power. By a look or a tone I have made him tremble like a child,—and before the face of that poor boy," and she pointed to Pierre, "he writhes with terror! Even to myself this influence is mysterious; but it saved Master Howard in his church; it shall save the

Lady Katharine in her captivity. Trust me—and farewell!”

She vanished without waiting for the patient's reply, or giving further explanation of her strange tidings; and Lyndesay, excited and apprehensive, would have followed, despite of his helplessness, but for the mute, though forcible, remonstrances of Pierre. After remaining, however, for a short interval, silent and deeply wrapt in thought, he called the dwarf to him, and a communication passed between them of which the result shall be presently known to our readers.

Meanwhile, we think it due to explain to them how our hero, who had at this time been but a few days restored to life and consciousness, escaped the fate which seemed to have overtaken him at Newbury.

It will be remembered that Howard and his faithful attendant Pierre had by chance fallen into company with the Royal troops on the night previous to the battle; and the deep anxiety of the good clergyman to ascertain the safety of his young friend, as well as to learn the fate of the day, had prompted him to suffer the departure of Pierre with the troops on their march,

with instructions to return immediately the issue of the contest should be declared. This was no novel mission to the dwarf, who, during the recent seclusion of his master, had constantly furnished him with tidings of importance from either army, through means of his communications with individuals in both. Amongst the Royalists he had but little difficulty in obtaining information; and the recent arrival of Ninon in the Parliamentary camp, where, amongst the Independents, she gained many votaries, had put Pierre in possession of their movements also.

It was through this channel that Howard had gained the intelligence which enabled him to give Haman timely notice of his impending danger, and on many occasions the sagacity and resources of the poor dwarf had been the means of the preservation of his patron. Indeed, the declaration of Ninon was quite true, that on the occasion of the violence done to him in his own church, it was owing to the strange terror with which Pierre's countenance inspired Jacobs, when, coming to his master's aid, he leaned over his senseless figure, that the bold trooper had been seized with a sudden panic, and had so

precipitately quitted the scene—a circumstance to which the good minister probably owed his life.

On the occasion of the battle of Newbury the dwarf seemed more than usually interested. His attachment to Lyndesay had been strong since the evening of the first day of their meeting, when Ninon's words had seemed to awaken it, and he had exhibited unequivocal signs of delight at seeing him again. He followed him into the battle unobserved; and, though ill-mounted and encumbered by a disguise, he was near at hand when the muskets were fired under which Lord Falkland and Lyndesay fell. Soon he cleared the hedge which hid the assailants, and hung a dead weight upon the arm of Jacobs, as he was preparing to fire a third time to make sure of his victim. The man turned and looked in the dwarf's face, then with a howl of abhorrence endeavoured to shake him off, and to fly from the spot; but the immense strength of Pierre was not so easily subdued. A desperate struggle ensued, which ended in the Captain's lying stunned upon the field, felled by the deadly blows of his antagonist, until the arrival of some of his comrades brought him assistance and relief.

Meantime Pierre, raising the head of the other arquebusier, who had expired under the unerring aim of Albert Lyndesay, was struck at finding that the dead man was Laurence Eilsie. A grim attempt at a smile passed across his features as he surveyed the two; but, hastening to the spot where Lyndesay had fallen, it soon vanished. The ball had entered the young soldier's side, and to all appearance life was extinct.

To raise him, stanch the blood, and bear away the lifeless body, was the work of a few minutes. Acquainted in his wanderings with every remote nook of the country, soon the acute mind of the dwarf fixed upon a spot which he had frequently proposed as a place of retreat to his master, far from every public road or human habitation. Here he knew was situated an untenanted shepherd's hut; the owner of this, as well as of the surrounding tract, having perished at Edge Hill, and the claims on the disputed inheritance remaining in abeyance. To this place he decided on conveying the body of the unfortunate young man, confident that if aught of life remained, the extraordinary skill of Ninon would prove most effectual in restoring it. To her care he proposed consign-

ing his charge, as the secrecy of the place would enable her there to tend him without suspicion amongst the party with whom she still maintained her credit; a secrecy to which her presence there would in its turn conduce, as few prying spirits cared to venture too near the solitary abode of the weird woman.

This plan the page executed accordingly, bearing his lifeless charge to the hut, covered with a cloak, and laid upon the back of his own horse, and then without loss of time he sought Ninon in Essex's camp.

For her unexplained disappearance that night none were able to account; but on that night in the Parliamentary as in the Royal army, men had severer losses to mourn, and the absence of one so eccentric caused but little remark. But the country people in the neighbourhood of the common deposed to having seen a black horse, mounted by a rider enveloped in a black cloak, and attended by the foul fiend himself, gallop towards the hut, and enter—horse and all; and they swore that afterwards a witch, alighting from a broomstick, joined the trio. This was enough to secure the privacy of the little abode;

and during the weary winter months which succeeded, no human foot sought that retired dwelling; save that of the pedlar with his wares, or the wayfarer who had unwittingly wandered from his path.

But the individuals whom we have mentioned were not its only tenants. On Pierre's communicating the result of the battle to Howard, he decided on immediately proceeding to ascertain the state of Lyndesay. Perhaps his confidence in Ninon's infallible resources might not be so great as that of Pierre. He therefore assumed a disguise, and proceeded to the hut.

On arriving he found that the old woman had succeeded in extracting the ball, though with fearful anguish to the patient; and, in spite of the sedatives she had applied, the sufferings of the wounded man were extreme. Long this state continued; and at length succeeded a raging fever, and for months all hope seemed idle.

Meantime, the dwarf had rejoined the party, and brought the intelligence, that having made Lilius Haman and her lover, who was fast recovering, parties to the secret of their habitation, the two had undertaken to supply them with all

necessaries through the instrumentality of Walter, who would seek employment in the neighbourhood. He also informed them, that after several days of jeopardy he had, on the retirement of the King's troops, released the Rev. Shimei Haman from his abode of solitary confinement; when that gentleman, vindictive for the abstinence to which Pierre's somewhat niggard hospitality had, it must be confessed, condemned him, had vowed to avenge himself by denouncing him and his preserver, Howard, and proclaiming his place of concealment. It was, therefore, well that the worthy clergyman had betaken himself to another; as we have seen that the Rev. Shimei, who was speedily reinstated in his house and possessions, had in his power ample means of putting any scheme of violence into execution.

Having thus accounted for the relative position of the principal parties concerned, we must return to the hut, where we left our hero and Pierre in close conference. Their dialogue ended by the dwarf's approaching a large chest or clothes-press, from which he took a short dark cloak of liver colour, which nearly covered his figure as he placed it on his shoulders; and subsequently

assuming an immensely high-crowned hat, round which he closely cropped his hair, the metamorphosis was complete. This done, he instantly quitted the cottage.

It was not long before Howard himself entered.

"My dear Lyndesay," said he, "I fear our retreat is in danger of being soon disturbed; for this morning I have beheld on the main roads, in several directions, bodies of the rebels in rapid movement. We shall do well to provide ourselves with another hiding-place."

"Perhaps, dear sir, we may not long need one. Do you know the object of these scoundrels' motions?"

"By no means; but they are in march for the metropolis."

"Then, perchance, I may be the readier gossip. They escort the Lady Katharine Wentworth—a prisoner—to the Tower of London!"

"My dear friend—you rave—you have a slight return of fever. Be guided by me, and take a little rest."

"Excuse me, my good sir, but I never was in my more sober senses. In fact, I have this in-

formation from one who has been, as she tells me, my nurse throughout this fearful malady, and who has now taken advantage of her assumed character to join the rebel troop for the protection her presence may afford their—their captive.”

“Ninon! has she then been here? She spoke but truth, or less than truth, of her care and devotion during your illness, and I waited but to tell you of it till all fear of exciting you had subsided, since at the time of your recovering consciousness she was absent from some motive unexplained. But where is Pierre? Has he accompanied her?”

“He has not. He has been despatched by myself to London, to procure for me a safe conduct from one of the Generals.”

“And your purpose——?”

“Is to offer myself a prisoner in exchange for her.”

“My beloved Lyndesay—my dear friend—this will never do. I know the state of your heart—your delirium betrayed it but too truly; and,” added he, with a smile, “should not now ask you *why* you did not question the Lady Katharine when at Oxford, as to whom she was about to

marry. But—ill as you are—but half recovered—to undergo a hard imprisonment!——”

“Better than that *she* should,” returned Lyndesay.

“But, my dearest Albert, in your present state, the harsh treatment of those hard-hearted jailers would probably cost you your life!”

“It were well spent in her service,” answered the young man, with emotion.

“Nay, but hear me. These grey hairs of mine have but little value, and soon the course of nature must cut them down. Let me offer to them the remnant of my age, which they have so long hunted down, in exchange for Katharine’s liberty; and keep your young blood unchilled by the freezing atmosphere of a prison, and your bold arm nerved for the defence of the country to which you owe it, and, may be—but God only knows that—for the support of her on whose account you would devote yourself. Indeed you have no right so to dispose of an existence which is to many persons—aye, and to your country herself—of so much worth and value.”

“Not one tithe of the value of your own, dear sir,” returned Lyndesay, embracing him. “But

on this point I entreat you to forbear further remonstrance. I am decided."

Seeing that opposition was useless, Howard took the wiser part, and remained silent. He internally resolved, however, on accompanying Lyndesay to the metropolis—a plan which he at length communicated to him. The latter objected that his name would not be included in the safe-conduct.

To arrive there, then, through the means of a disguise, was the only resource; and as several days elapsed before the return of Pierre, the arrangements for Howard's journey were matured and put in execution on his arrival.

He brought with him the safe-conduct, signed by Lieutenant-General Cromwell, together with a written promise from the General of an interview, which he appointed for the succeeding day. The difficulty of gaining access to any of the party leaders for one in the position of the page, had caused the delay.

On that night, then, our hero started for London, gallantly equipped as became a cavalier of his rank, and well mounted. In the rear rode Howard, in the costume of a servant, wearing

Lyndesay's colours, and carrying his knapsack : for Pierre, whose sagacity had not failed to suggest to him the extreme inequality of our hero's strength to the undertaking, had, with the anticipation of himself proving his companion, caused to be inserted in the safe-conduct the name of a servant, an appendage too universal amongst the cavaliers to excite question or remark.

The travellers arrived in the metropolis on the following morning, without adventure worthy of notice, and immediately Lyndesay betook himself to Clerkenwell, where in the Nunnery Close stood the mansion at that time occupied by Oliver Cromwell.

This great man, now speedily rising to notoriety, had already attained an ascendancy with his party which caused alarm and jealousy to the Presbyterian faction ; and his house was the focus whence issued the vigorous and uncompromising measures of the dominant sect. Himself the originator of many a bold scheme and no less crafty fraud, he became the organ of popular clamours which he himself had raised ; and when Lyndesay arrived at his door, he found himself surrounded by a crowd of applicants of every degree and

calling, ready to offer their "most sweet voices," to assist the General's deliberations previously to his proceeding to the parliament house.

Lyndesay was, without difficulty, admitted: but a short delay occurred previously to his introduction, as General Cromwell was engaged at the moment with one of the inferior officers of his regiment. When at length the door of the General's apartment was opened to admit him, the closing sentences of the dialogue which met his ear savoured but little of the military character.

"Apropos, then, General, of my old suit touching that wench in the Tower. When am I to have my bargain?"

"Verily, the times are evil for the urging of such suits; yet will the flesh ever rebel against the spirit, and, as we said before, though there be many that run to and fro, yet must these things have an end. Wherefore, man, if so be that the Lord permit it, thou shalt obtain the suit, touching which thou art moved to petition us, to-morrow, at the hour of noon precisely."

This was uttered by a harsh and dissonant voice within, in tones rendered yet more discordant by

the nasal twang which seemed purposely added to lengthen the accents into solemn periods. In apparent imitation of this, the first speaker replied, "Amen! and praised be the Lord and your goodness!"—and quitting the room, suddenly encountered Lyndesay in the doorway. The meeting was but for a moment, but the recognition was mutual. Lyndesay saw in him his attempted murderer at Newbury, his dark enemy on the evening of the hall at Oxford, and his antagonist on the night of the firing of Lord Strafford's mansion.

His first impulse was to seize the man by the throat, and demand an account; but, recollecting his present situation and errand, anxiety to secure in the first instance the object for which he had sought that presence recurred to him with force, and the thought of Katharine carried the day against personal resentment.

The Dominican, alias Captain Jacobs, hurried away no less precipitately; indeed, the sight of Lyndesay, whom he believed dead by his own hand, had struck his bronzed cheek pale; and, uttering an exclamation of horror, he rushed by him, and mingled with the crowd without. Lyndesay was thus left alone with Oliver Cromwell,

The General was sitting at a table covered with tracts and charts, his hard and ungainly figure habited in an entire suit of dusky brown cloth, with a narrow band and turned-down collar of the coarsest linen, not clean to a nicety. One foot, cased in a heavy riding boot, rested on a copy of Hooker's Ecclesiastical Polity, which lay open on the floor; the other was thrust into an opposite chair. His coarse and bony hands were engaged, the one in holding before his eyes a book entitled "Antichrist in the Bottomless Pit; or, a sweet savour from the Gardens of the New Jerusalem;" and the other, besmeared with ink, guided a pen in making sundry characters on the margin of a volume which lay on the table, headed "Storia di Rienzi;" to which the General's eyes, under cover of the tract upon Antichrist, were habitually directed. A huge volume of Cæsar's Commentaries formed his cushion at the back. The ink-pot had been overturned over a spreading parchment map of England, and the dark stream was coursing along the surface of the chart, blending city, plain, and river, in one dusky chaos, so that a bright tract here and there was all that remained to identify the fair land delineated.

On Lyndesay's entrance, General Cromwell cast a curious glance at him from behind his entrenchment of "Antichrist;" then promptly laying down the book, he rose and welcomed the young Cavalier in a manner at once courteous and awkward. In his voice Lyndesay could not have recognised the same which had uttered the drawling, melancholy tones he had heard but a moment or two before.

"Ha! Major Lyndesay, I think. Pray be seated. But," he added in a lower tone—for he was ever on the watch for a secret negotiation with the royal party—"if you have any communication to make to me, we will retire to an inner apartment. This, as you see," and he laughed aloud, "is but my guard-room, and here," pointing to his books and charts, "are my implements of war. But within, young gentleman—within—is our presence chamber."

Surprised at so much cordiality, as likewise at the whimsically royal tone of this most energetic Republican, Lyndesay merely replied,—

"The cause of my coming hither, General Cromwell, may be well explained in this, which you are pleased to term your guard-room. Few

words will suffice.”—Here a singular and unaccountable grimace passed across Cromwell’s countenance, but it certainly was not indicative of satisfaction. Albert, however, continued :—
“Hearing that you are at the present possessed of authority in the Tower, I come to ask as a boon that a young lady, the daughter of the late Earl of Strafford, now confined there, may be restored to liberty, on condition of my surrendering my own person to captivity in her stead.”

As he spoke this request, Cromwell had eyed him askance with an arch and criticising expression, which spoke his rapid insight into the young man’s feelings, and his motives for urging this suit ; then with a burst which almost startled Lyndesay, he broke forth into a peal of laughter, loud, boisterous, and seemingly inextinguishable. As our hero could neither assign a cause for this merriment, nor apparently hope for its termination, he felt but little inclination to join in it, but sat calmly awaiting a reply. At length General Cromwell spoke :—

“Odds life ! But if I keep this damsel much longer in the Tower, I must needs provide a council to look to her affairs, and answer addresses

on her behalf. Yesternight comes to me old mother Ninon—the witch, as some say—and reads me a volume of anathemas if I cleanse not the camp of this accursed thing, as she terms the pretty wench. Then next, yon knave who but now left me, and who himself seized the prey: he must have his reward too. Faith, young man, I like thy face the best of the three; and thou shalt have thy suit.”

The future Lord Protector had not been slow to perceive the advantage of receiving, as a prisoner, a brave and active young soldier, devoted to the cause he served, in the stead of a delicate maiden, whose imprisonment could bring no benefit to her captors, but, on the contrary, would shock the prejudices of the English nation in general; even the best thinking of the party who detained her.

“When and where shall the exchange take place?” demanded Lyndesay.

“To-morrow, and at half an hour after noon. And, by the way, have you considered how my young lady is to be escorted in safety to her friends when once set free? I wager you, there are a few wild spirits abroad.”

"My servant, whom I can dispense with, will be her companion."

"Your servant? Psha! man! What would your servant do against fifty armed troopers? But we war not with women; and I will appoint her a guard until she is beyond the reach of danger, and will answer for her safety. I—I also have daughters, young man. And now as to the *where*. Surrender yourself at the Tower a prisoner, at the hour I mentioned to-morrow, and rely on me for the rest. Say, will you trust me? Yes or no?"

"I will," replied Lyndesay. And the interview terminated.

CHAPTER III.

Oh, for a tongue to curse the slave,
Whose treason, like a deadly blight,
Comes o'er the councils of the brave,
And blasts them in their hour of might !
May Life's unblessed cup, for him,
Be drugg'd with treacheries to the brim,—
With hopes, that but allure to fly,—
With joys, that vanish while he sips ;
Like Dead Sea fruits, that tempt the eye,
But turn to ashes on the lips !
May he, at last, with lips of flame,
On the parch'd desert, thirsting, die,—
While lakes that shone, in mockery, nigh,
Are fading off, untouch'd, untasted,
Like the once-glorious hopes he blasted !—MOORE.

BUT it is time that we turn our attention to the fate of our heroine, whose captivity had now been of some days' duration. The knowledge that she was a prisoner was, however, the only very severe feature in her case, since in other respects her situation had been rendered extremely tolerable.

The custody of the Tower was then in the hands of the Lord Mayor Pennington, a creature of the parliament; but as that august body still retained some regard for social order, and the house of Peers had not yet ceased to exist, the rank of Katharine received the consideration which was its due; and she felt her present position a comparative release from the frightful custody of Captain Jacobs. As she was a prisoner at large within the precincts of the Tower, she spent much of her time in loitering upon the walls, or wandering, attended by Alice, through the open courts and galleries which connected the different parts of the fortress; for her mind, ill at ease, found solace in the very change of place.

In truth, though not menaced with any imminent peril, there was room for deep and painful reflection. The dark hints thrown out by Jacobs of his power to enforce his suit, and, by some previous compact with the leaders of his party, to obtain their sanction to his compelling Katharine by violence to accede to it, recurred fearfully to her mind, as a wildly incredible dream; yet her present situation was too sadly real for her

totally to disregard his menaces. Even should she escape this threatened struggle, she knew not what might be the duration of her captivity, nor what the King's power to redeem her from it. And, as she gazed upon those antique towers and grey walls, which had heard her father's latest groans, and witnessed his last struggle, her heart misgave her. Daily, she passed under the apartments which that beloved parent had occupied, when the awful and unexpected summons arrived, which was to shut out life and light from that soaring spirit for ever; and, as she paused and wept, imagination invested every surrounding object with affecting interest,—for they were the last he had looked upon! What had been his thoughts, his aspirations, as he contemplated from his prison chamber that tower,—that buttress,—the ancient chapel wall? 'Were they thoughts of Heaven,—of his country,—of his family,—of *her*, his child?

Still, in one of those dreary apartments, pined away his friend and coadjutor, the venerable Laud, the Primate of England; but the persecuting proceedings which terminated in his blood, were already in progress, and Katharine

watched in vain for one glimpse of that hoary head, which was so soon to roll upon the scaffold; those hands which had been raised to bless her father on his last short passage to eternity,—for the captive had ceased to beat against its cage, and the old man languished in silence and immobility, already dead to the things of this world.

But there were not wanting fellow prisoners, some of them at large like herself, amongst whom the Lady Katharine occasionally recognised an old familiar face. More frequently, however, all were strange, as the prisoners of the cavalier party were, for the most part, committed to close confinement. The tender mercies of the ruling factions had successively consigned so many of all opposite opinions to the safe keeping of the Tower, that hardly a chamber in that vast fortress was tenantless.

The Lady Katharine, who sought seclusion, was accustomed to pace for hours a terrace but little frequented, and known by the name of “Northumberland’s Walk,” in consequence, it was supposed, of its having been the melancholy resort of the condemned Earl, who bowed his

neck on the block for his bold attempt to head the rising of the North. Be that as it may, the place had been assigned to state prisoners in former times, though the equalizing principle of the period of which we write, had levelled distinctions in the Tower, as elsewhere; and any who chose to frequent the gloomy and ominous walk were now at liberty to do so. For some time, the Lady Katharine and her attendant were its only visitors; but a few days after her arrival in the place, Katharine perceived that another individual was added to the party.

This was an officer, and, as it appeared by his dress, not of the Puritan party; though he bore not either the distinctive marks of the high-bred cavalier. He was of middle stature, and of a robust and well proportioned figure, exhibiting the appearance of great bodily strength. His countenance was distinguished chiefly by an expression of extreme blandness and good humour; not, however, to the seclusion of indications of higher qualities, which stamped it, on the whole, with a certain air of dignity. His brow wore an honest and manly expression, and there was something in his whole bearing so calculated to inspire

confidence, that the Lady Katharine felt not alarmed when, on her having addressed some remark to Alice, relative to their present prospects of release, she found that the quick ear of the stranger, whom she had believed far beyond the report of her voice, had caught her words; for he turned, and approaching her, with a manner respectful in the extreme, though blunt, and far from courtly, he acquainted her without circumlocution, that he was aware of her name and rank, and since from the remark he had overheard, he found her yet to be uncertain of release, he offered his services in any effort to improve her present condition, or in using an influence, of which he seemed confident, in the proper quarters, to obtain her restoration to liberty.

Katharine was surprised; but she was grateful for the friendly tone of his address, so ungracefully, yet heartily, proffered. She thanked him, and with a frankness correspondent with his own, she made him acquainted with her situation, with the events attending her capture, and the motives which now operated in her alternate hope and fear; concealing nothing but the insulting overtures of Jacobs, which her sensitive and lofty spirit could not stoop to recount.

The stranger listened with the deepest attention, and promised to enforce her petition for liberty, on terms which he should submit for approbation, with those in authority; a task he appeared to think would not be difficult, as he agreed in Katharine's suggestion, that the King had probably by this time adopted measures to procure an exchange.

To our heroine it seemed somewhat unaccountable, that a fellow prisoner should have influence in procuring the liberty of another, while unable to acquire his own; but the situation of parties at the time was so complicated, that such an anomaly was not wholly incredible.

From this moment, however, the officer attached himself to Katharine's side, and became the daily companion of her walks. Evidently struck in the first instance by her beauty, and urged by a manly feeling of compassion towards one so innocent and injured, the charm of her wit and manners completed the fascination; and he availed himself of her extreme anxiety to learn intelligence of the movements of her party to hold out hopes daily to her of a release which he himself inwardly deprecated.

On her part, so engrossed was she with a terrible apprehension which acquired strength by solitude, and by each day's delay of tidings, that she had never even faintly dreamed of the impression which she was making upon her companion ; and consequently gave free play to the expression of the gratitude with which she regarded his efforts in her favour, hesitating not to demonstrate the pleasure which his society afforded her. This pleasure was, however, destined to be abruptly terminated.

He had not been slow in discovering that her mind was oppressed with some fear of a worse nature than that of a lengthened imprisonment ; and, on receiving the circumstances of her capture, he contrived, by a few direct and blunt questions, to elicit from her sufficient to establish a conviction in his mind of the nature of the menaces uttered to her by Jacobs. The wrath of the stranger, on this discovery, was beyond bounds. With a volley of truly English execrations, which we forbear to record, he sent the Captain and his whole party to the devil :—and after a gratuitous oration, not strictly to the purpose, neither rich in fluency nor elegance, he

intimated in terms not difficult to construe, his own reasons for interposing between her and all such risks for the future.

Plunged in new difficulties, our heroine for a moment doubted the reality of the scene; but the tone of the man left no doubt of his sincerity. She looked in his face, and there read the same earnest and ingenuous expression which had struck her on their first meeting: but with pain she saw that the countenance was now disturbed, as he awaited her reply. Then for the first time her heart smote her, and, blaming her own heedlessness, she burst into tears.

Her companion was not one of those practised knights who would have been ready to welcome this effusion of feeling as an auspicious omen, or, perhaps, a well-acted demonstration. Candid and sincere himself, he saw that his hints had awakened sentiments of real sorrow; and, with the frankness of a soldier, but the awkward embarrassment of a novice, he immediately poured forth a profusion of apologies.

“Forgive me, dear lady, if I have offended you. Truly I am not worthy of such as you,—and I know it. But enough of that. Though

now you see me here a prisoner, something tells me that this arm will one day be powerful to protect you. But I have acted ungenerously to hint on such a subject now, as if my service to you must be bought at this price. But do not think so meanly of me. Speak, Lady Katharine Wentworth, and withdraw not from me your esteem, if I may ask no more. Permit me still to offer you my counsel and assistance."

"It must not be," Katharine replied immediately. "Already I have been to blame, and my selfish blindness has misled you. Accept my gratitude—it is all I have to give."

"Your last words are sufficient, lady. Let us yet meet as friends."

"Better we parted now," said Katharine. "Forgive me, and farewell!"

She extended her hand, and the rough soldier, as he pressed it to his lips, strove to conceal the disappointed feeling which for the moment overcame him. He turned away abruptly, and Katharine, no less moved, took advantage of the occasion to retire to her apartments.

From their dreary solitude she did not stir again during her abode in the Tower, but waited,

in daily hope of relief from the royal quarters, amused by occasional reports which Alice contrived to elicit, through the officers on duty at the fortress, of negotiations pending for an exchange, and of the favourable orders issued by Cromwell for her accommodation and indulgence. In these, Katharine mournfully traced the good offices of her *ci-devant* lover, but the reflection gave her pain; and under the accumulation of sorrowful circumstances, as well as the close confinement, her health was beginning to give way.

One morning she was startled by an early visit from the governor, who, with a rather embarrassed air, announced to her the commands of General Cromwell, that she should attend him in the Chapel of the Fortress at noon of the same day, accompanied by her waiting-woman. To her inquiry as to the purport of so extraordinary an appointment, Pennington answered only, that he believed it was to solemnize a marriage.

The Lady Katharine's cheek grew pale; but, aware of the utter hopelessness of opposition, she signified her acquiescence in the arrangement, and, dismissing the Lieutenant, applied herself to

a preparation for the trying scene in which she foresaw she must bear a prominent part.

The hours flew, and soon the midday peal rang upon all the clocks of the fortress. Never had they fallen upon the ear of the state criminal, whose last hour they told, with more fatal augury than now upon that of the fair young maiden who, alone and undefended, was about to encounter the power of men, of whom she only knew that they desecrated and trampled on all that from youth she had held most sacred and most dear.

Soon the escort of guards appeared, and, with a palpitating heart, the Lady Katharine submitted to be conducted to the Chapel.

On entering she found several persons assembled; among whom, prominent alike by his position, and by the incongruous medley of habiliments which adorned the outward man, stood Jacobs.

Desirous to wear a gay dress befitting the occasion, yet limited in his choice by the sober style of his sect, the ex-priest had adopted the scarlet uniform still in use amongst the Parlia-

mentary troops who were under the command of Cromwell; and, being enabled, by this fortunate circumstance, to escape the sombre livery of the day, he had given free scope to his taste in the further decoration of his costume with sundry tassels, fringes, and lace of diverse colours; forming, as he opined, a *tout-ensemble* befitting a gay bridegroom.

There were those present who prophesied a coming catastrophe, since the stern and harsh desperado had turned buffoon. Sudden revolutions are ominous, and the rugged rock, that should all at once bloom with exotics, would charm us not, but terrify, as the harbinger or the result of some fearful crash of nature's machinery.

Blazing in the foreground of all this dazzling attire, hung the brilliant gem, the property of Albert Lyndesay, whom its wearer still believed to be numbered with the dead; for his disordered imagination, darkened by guilt, had assigned to the form he had encountered on his exit from Cromwell's apartments the character of a visitor from the other world, whom his own compact with the General had led to

burst the doors of his prison-house. It was on this account that he had on that occasion fled so rapidly.

At the present time, however, elated with success, and having, as he believed, reached the goal which had been so long his apparently impossible object, the sense of the supernatural would hardly have appalled him; and, as he eagerly stepped forward to seize the Lady Katharine's hand, a smile of malicious triumph sat upon his lips, and the bold glance of his eyes betrayed a wild transport.

"Now, mistress, I have you, methinks. And you leave not this church till you're mine, for good and all."

Katharine turned away her face, and resolutely avoiding his grasp, she advanced towards the assembled group, consisting chiefly of the officers on duty, with some of the prisoners at large in the Tower, all wondering at the scene, and ignorant of the purpose for which they had been summoned. The low and gentle tone in which the maiden demanded, "Who is in authority here?" was answered by a general indication of that individual, towards whom a passage was

immediately opened, as well as by whispered announcements of his name.

The Lady Katharine turned towards him, and beheld him in close conference with an officer, the very man who had until the last few days been the companion of her walks. Somewhat reassured, but colouring deeply as the mutual recognition took place, the young lady spoke unhesitatingly.

“General Cromwell: I request—nay, demand of you protection against the insults of this churl. You know my birth, the injustice of my detention here, and the efforts of my friends, till now cruelly thwarted, for my release.”

“I know them all, fair lady. Yet it is my pleasure that the marriage shall proceed.”

“Impossible!” returned the maiden. “You cannot meditate so fearfully to injure a helpless and defenceless woman.”

“It is because she is so helpless and defenceless, my pretty damsel, that I would give her a strong and redoubted captain for her husband to defend her.”

Katharine’s cheek grew pale as death, and a sickness came over her which caused her to totter

as she stood. Some one near supported her. At this moment the officer who had been looking on in mute amazement at this strange scene, suddenly interposed.

“General Cromwell! what would you do? You cannot mean this!”

“Hold thy prating, George,” responded the other; and catching the ear of the stranger with a friendly pinch, he approximated it to his lips, and whispered a few words which satisfied or silenced his companion, for he offered no further remonstrance.

But the Lady Katharine, nearly fainting as she was, possessed a spirit which bowed not before the mere display of brute force. Though her white lips quivered, and her whole frame trembled violently, she raised her voice to a pitch which all present could hear, as she distinctly said,—

“Never, while she lives, will the daughter of the Earl of Strafford submit to degradation. You may imprison me—kill me, if you will—but degrade me, never. I beg all here present to hear this protest, and I appeal to their own consciences if it be not just.”

There was an universal murmur of assent; but Cromwell, unmoved, continued to gaze upon the Lady Katharine with a look of curious scrutiny. At length he calmly remarked,—

“Bravo! young one, An eaglet from the ancient eyrie. That look reminds me of Westminster Hall. What sayest thou, Jacobs—supposing the damsel should decline the vows?”

“Then I will take them for both, Master Cromwell,” boldly replied the man addressed. “It needs not that both parties should pronounce them. Let the service proceed: give me this proud wench in charge, and I will undertake she shall not prove contumacious.”

“Be it so, then,” replied the General, and, at a sign from him, the chaplain in attendance, a minister of the Independent faction, prepared to commence the service.

Oliver Cromwell possessed that reverence, perhaps even an undue one, for rank and hereditary honours which characterises all usurpers; and his conduct on this occasion excited the wonder of all present, while their indignation would have made itself loudly heard, but for something in the countenance of the General which perplexed and

confounded them. Even at this period the bold features of character which he displayed, had gained him an almost incredible ascendancy over the minds of all those with whom he associated. When, therefore, he required that the service should proceed, no opposition was made, and the shameless villain who was to enact the bridegroom approached the Lady Katharine, and essayed to put his arm round her, with the intention to conduct her by force to the altar. The next moment he was felled nearly to the earth by a blow from the mail-gloved hand of the General.

“Ha, knave! how darest thou?” said Cromwell. The bold Captain thus repulsed, recovering himself with an effort, turned upon Cromwell rather disconcerted, but affecting to consider the matter as a joke, merely said,—

“Something too hard for mirth, my master.” But his ill-assumed confidence changed into mad rage when Oliver Cromwell again addressed him.

“Approach this lady at thy peril. What! didst thou think a vile cur like thyself was to be mated with the best and the brightest of England’s high-born maidens!”

“Ha! your promise, General,—your promise,” said Jacobs, turning upon him fiercely.

“ My promise, thou knave?—Yes, I will keep it surely. I pledged thee my word thou shouldest wed at noon this day ‘ that pretty wench in the Tower.’ There she stands; take her, and thank thy good stars that thy presumption has not met with severer chastisement.”

As Cromwell pronounced these words he pointed towards Alice, who, having by his command accompanied her mistress to the chapel, had stood unnoticed amongst the guards, during the time that the general attention had been concentrated upon the Lady Katharine. On finding herself thus publicly called upon, she dropped her veil and affected to retire; but soon the voice of the inflexible General recalled her, summoning her to take her place by the side of Jacobs.

“ Nay, mistress, no feigning: I cry thee mercy if my stout trooper be a bargain to be cavilled at by a coquettish waiting-maid. Come hither, and hasten to bind thyself for better and for worse, for the bridegroom we see is impatient.—Ha! ha!—” and he was overtaken by one of those irrepressible bursts of laughter to which he was liable, and which the ludicrous position of all parties on this occasion seemed well calculated to elicit. Nearly all present joined in his mirth.

To describe the mad fury of the dupe of this characteristic trick were beyond the reach of language. Looking around for a way to escape, he swore with a fearful oath, that no power either of earth or heaven should force him to these nuptials.

“Thou knowest, Jacobs, that, according to thy creed, it needs not that both parties should pronounce the vows,” said Cromwell. “Guards! form a circle round the pair,—and you, reverend sir, proceed.” He was obeyed; and Alice, whose attempts to be heard had been overruled, and who, to say truth, did not feel any very serious compunctions at entering into the holy state of matrimony with so gay a bridegroom, and one whom she had formerly seen in the exercise of such absolute authority, made the requisite responses in a voice a little tremulous perhaps, but far from despairing, while her future husband stood by silent, with teeth clenched and eyes that shot fire, as the wild boar, hemmed in by hunters, preparing to take his death-leap.*

* The incident here introduced is founded upon a well authenticated anecdote of Oliver Cromwell, who, when Lord Protector, having become aware that one of his daughters (afterwards, we believe, the Lady Fauconberg,) was addressed by a person much

The service was concluded, and the half-affrighted bride looked into the face of him who stood by her side. In its expression she read terror and despair. Casting not a glance upon her, the desperate man slowly turned round and faced his persecutor. A fearful pause ensued, during which Jacobs appeared to be struggling with inward madness for the power of utterance. At length he spoke, but it was in a changed and hollow tone.

“ You think you have juggled—outwitted me; but you have vanquished but half the man. Vengeance remains behind. In life and in death I will not neglect it. Sure it is that to possess that woman I have toiled and plotted, and welcomed perjury,—aye, and murder too,—but they were not new to me. Hear my tale, and judge whether you shall escape.

“ Horror and compunction for crime I have never known, save *once*,—and of that foul act I was a witness only. It was committed before my

her inferior in station (one of the ministers of the Independent sect), himself detected the reverend gentleman on a visit to the young lady, and permitted him not to leave his daughter's apartment until he had given his hand in marriage to her waiting-woman.

eyes when yet a boy, and the scene has haunted me like a fiend through life. It has assumed different shapes. Sometimes an accursed witch, sometimes a hideous dwarf, has crossed my path; for ever bearing the features of that Provençale woman as she gave the child into the hands of the priest, and cursed the murderer with a curse that still rings in my ears. It was on that night that I was initiated into the mysteries of murder. Since then many a time have I rehearsed them, but without shuddering. Remorse has been a stranger to me from that hour. Once only did I tell the tale, and it was to the one man living who knew it,—its bloody instigator. Once too I wrote it, but the manuscript was lost, and the secret shall perish with me.

“But the dwarf—the hideous spectre!—embodying all those horrors,—twice he has crossed me when my hands were steeped in blood,—in the church and in the battle-field. Something tells me that when he comes again, my own—But enough of this weakness. I would tell of my revenge, and yet I am reverting to that only scene of blood where guilt was not on my part. Yet ask if it has been wanting since. Ask the

Cardinal minister, late of France, who gave me gold and insult, and fondly dreamed he bought my service, but received through my report a lie. Ask the haughty Marquis of Montrose, who spurned me as a venomous reptile, who it was that poisoned the springs of his love, and cast a stain upon his honour? Ask the coward Duke of Hamilton, who thought to make me the despised tool of his own tyranny and artifice:—ask him whose hand laid open before the Monarch's eyes the damning proofs of treachery which have lodged him a prisoner in Pendennis Castle?—Ask him you called Albert Lyndesay, if indeed he yet could answer, if I have not fatally revenged the wound his hand dealt to me when first we met. He dared to cross me in arms; he dared to love yon pale girl, whose cheeks tingle now at his very name,—and dearly he has paid for it. I possessed the secret of his birth,—a secret the proud lords of Richelieu and Hamilton would have prized as their heart's blood,—but it gave me power and the means of vengeance, and I will take it to the grave unwhispered. This gem which you see here alone could have established his claim to descent from two

noble houses, equal, nay, superior, proud damsel, to thine own. But it was on his *love* that my vengeance delighted to wreak itself. He visited Oxford, and, lest he should again presume, this hand pointed his astonished notice to a scene—you may remember it, lady—where the object of his passion received the devotion of a royal Prince. Aye, Albert Lyndesay witnessed all, and believed that the vows of Charles Stuart fell upon a willing ear. Nay, weep not, woman: were he living you had not heard this. Ha! methinks my words touch you *now*. Your lover,—yes, your lover,—died at Newbury, believing you basely inconstant. He died,—but I hear footsteps, and I have more to say. Hold, General Cromwell: I would ask how you yourself fostered me—a spy in the Queen's Court;—how you sought my service, how you promised me reward, how you perjured yourself, and how you—died for it.”

As he spoke, and before he had uttered the last words, the remorseless man had rapidly extricated from his girdle two small pistols, which, with the speed of lightning, he aimed, the one at Oliver Cromwell, the other at his own breast.

In an instant the double report rang in the air.

Cromwell had turned his head aside to view the party whose approach, noticed by Jacobs, seemed to precipitate the catastrophe. Many present had turned also ; and as the pistols were on the point of being discharged the footsteps approached near, and, through a low arch in the building appeared our hero, Albert Lyndesay, who, according to his appointment, had surrendered at this hour.

He was accompanied by Pierre, who had found means to rejoin his masters in London ; and was followed by a file of guards, appointed by Cromwell to receive him at the gates of the Tower. His first glance towards the party assembled, made him aware of the General's danger.

With an almost superhuman fleetness, he darted forward, and, in a second, his hand was upon the arm of Jacobs, and the contents of the pistol intended for Cromwell, were lodged in the stone pavement. The other failed not of its mark, and the suicide received the bullet in his breast.

It was all the work of a moment ; and Oliver

Cromwell on turning to the spot, beheld the Dominican prostrate on the earth, struggling in the agonies of death. Once he opened his eyes, and fixed them on Lyndesay, "Ha! dost thou bear a charmed life?" he said, as his feeble hand instinctively sought the hilt of his sword. But at that instant he perceived Pierre; and, with a shudder, visible even in that awful moment, his glance was arrested; and the glazed eye dwelt upon the object of its abhorrence and fear, till he became fixed in death.

"Be thine own life charmed or no, young master," said Cromwell, "thou hast to all intents charmed mine; else had I lain now on a level with yon miscreant, who has at least saved us a halter. Remove the body, some of ye; but first take off that jewel which adorns the breast, and restore it to this gallant young Cavalier, who, by the fellow's own confession, is its rightful owner. I will requite thee further presently, Master Lyndesay, for the debt I owe. And for what more particularly concerns thyself in this knave's last confession, I refer thee to yonder fair maiden; for women have quick wits and ready memories. Meanwhile, mistress," continued he, turning to

the trembling and petrified Alice, "since fate has deprived thee of a husband, and made thee maid, wife, and widow in an hour, thou shalt not at least be dowerless. This fellow was not poor : too long he had received the hire of crime ; and now, by right of law, his money, goods, and chattels, are thine own. Cheer up, girl ! I warrant thee, thou wilt quickly find a better mate."

Struck dumb with horror, as all had been at the dreadful deed, the words of Cromwell seemed to recall the bystanders to their senses, and his careless tone in some measure dissipated their dismay. His orders were promptly obeyed ; and Lyndesay, who was already at Katharine's side, received the recovered pledge of his birthright, with an expression of gratitude fervent as it was sincere.

"How now, my mistress !" said Cromwell, turning towards the Lady Katharine Wentworth. "But half an hour ago you were loud in your protestations against the injustice of your detention here ; and now this young gentleman has procured your liberty, methinks you are somewhat tardy in taking advantage of it."

Poor Katharine's sole answer was to blush

deeply, to turn white, and then to blush again. In truth, during that brief interval, words had passed between the lovers—words never to be forgotten—of mutual forgiveness, and enduring love. Few and low were their tones, and unnoticed for the most part, in the consternation of that hour. Both hearts were full of happiness, and it was hard to part so soon.

“A word with you,” said General Cromwell, addressing the two. And as they followed him to a remote part of the building, Katharine caught the grave expression on the countenance of the officer, who had so generously interposed in her behalf, as his eye was fixed upon her. He also was leaving the chapel, and she was unable to thank him, for he evidently avoided her.

The lovers were conducted by Oliver Cromwell into a retired apartment, and, wondering at his strange conduct, they awaited in silence his further proceeding.

“Now seat yourselves, most puissant knight and fair lady,” said the future Protector, “and hear the proposal I have to make. You love—nay, deny it not—I am no novice—and you are loath to part. I, on my side, owe you a debt, no

less an one than my life. I would risk mine for you in return, but that would be of no avail. Credit with my party, I cannot—no, Master Lyndesay,” and here his brow knit with emotion —“ I cannot, will not, give it. It is more to me than gratitude—than riches—than honour—than life itself. To give you, a devoted Royalist, at once your liberty, would destroy that credit—the work of a life—at a single blow. Little can I do either to alleviate the captivity which will fall with no light hand on one like you. You have, then, here, but the prospect of an imprisonment which will deprive your party for ever of your services ; which will separate you from this fair girl without the hope of reunion—and, probably, by its hardships, act fatally on your already weakened frame. Now, hear me. Renounce a wicked and unrighteous cause ; abandon a fallen party ; take service or not, as you please, in the ranks of patriotism and freedom. Only abjure the tyrant’s faction, and from this moment you are free ; and this young maiden shall, if she wills it, leave the Tower walls as your bride.”

He ceased ; and the betrothed pair, who had read the answer in each other’s eyes, remained

silent; for the contempt and indignation roused by this proposal were too strong for utterance. At length Lyndesay rose, and advancing towards Katharine, he placed as a pledge upon her finger, the signet ring which had been presented to him by her father on the night of their interview. The Lady Katharine threw about his neck the ribbon to which was attached the case containing the cherished lock of hair, and, after one burst of heart-breaking anguish, she gently withdrew her hand from the lips to which it was so fervently pressed, and turning away, each pronounced the word "Farewell!"

Oliver Cromwell rose to depart, and he brushed his rough hand across his eyes. "They *would* have it so," muttered he; "they have chosen their fate, and must abide by it."

He, however, fulfilled to the letter the compact he had made with Lyndesay, for the Lady Katharine's safe escort towards her friends; and soon her lover heard with satisfaction that she had joined the Queen, with whom she took refuge in France from the increasing troubles.

Albert Lyndesay remained some time a prisoner; but, whether through his own superior

ingenuity and alertness; whether through the negligence of his jailers, or the connivance of some high in authority, he at length found means to escape; and without delay he proceeded, though with much difficulty, to join Montrose, whose dazzling and romantic exploits were now in full career.

We shall not enter into the details of the military operations in which our hero shared the laurels of his gallant leader. Suffice it to say, that, in the daring achievements at Aberdeen, Fyvie, Inverlochy, Aulderne, and Kilsyth, Albert Lyndesay fully sustained the reputation for courage and loyalty which was already attached to his name.

And when, after the fatal surprise and massacre at Philiphaugh, he left the field with Montrose, and subsequently, like him, obeyed the commands of the betrayed monarch to lay down their arms; he was among the last to abandon that land whence had arisen the latest flickering, yet brilliant, flashes of chivalrous devotion to the royal cause.

CHAPTER IV.

Undone, undone, the lawyers are,
They wander about the town,
Nor can find the way to Westminster,
Now Charing Cross is down ;
At the end of the Strand, they make a stand,
Swearing they are at a loss,
And, chaffing, say, that's not the way,
They must go by Charing Cross.

The Parliament to vote it down,
Conceived it very fitting,
For fear it should fall, and kill them all,
In the house as they were sitting.
They were told, god-wot, it had a plot,
Which made them so hard-hearted,
To give command, it should not stand,
But be taken down and carted.

PERCY RELIQUES.

It was the eve of the fatal thirtieth of January, and the early darkness, which at this season of the year overtakes the metropolis, was increased by a dense black fog, which enveloped in a haze even

the few lantern or torch-lights borne by the passers to and fro, or appearing in the window of some vender of drugs or hostel-keeper, as the wayfarer threaded the gloomy streets of the cities of London and Westminster. The cold was intense, and the dark figures which were gliding from quarter to quarter, muffled in cloak and wrapper, scarcely distinguished their acquaintance from the mass of woollens and sables under which they still shivered.

Nevertheless, despite the dreariness and inclemency of the evening, there was an appearance of stir and bustle, and many passengers were abroad. In particular, the front of the palace of Whitehall was a scene almost of tumult, as crowds assembled below marked the progress of the work now proceeding on the level of one of the upper stories. Torches were busy here and there; and the sound of saw and hatchet, with the heavy clang of the workman's hammer, proclaimed to the neighbourhood around that the deadly stage was erecting which was to exhibit to Europe on the morrow the awful spectacle of a martyred monarch.

The palace of Whitehall, which, under James I.,

had been enlarged and decorated on a scale worthy of the royal metropolitan residence, after the design of Inigo Jones, occupied at the time of our tale both sides of the whole of the streets now called Whitehall and Parliament Street, as far as Scotland Yard on the river side; and on the other the palace terminated at the opening towards Spring Gardens, then literally gardens. The opposite buildings were connected by a curious gallery or causeway, which ran across the street between them, and further, on the Westminster side, appeared the beautiful turretted gateway named Holbein's Gate, which faced the spot called Charing Cross at the other end of the street, where ought to have stood at present the brazen equestrian statue of King Charles, which had been cast by Le Sœur as early as 1633. The ancient cross, modelled by Cavalini, and placed by King Edward on the spot where for the last time the corpse of his beloved Elinor rested on its journey towards its long home in the Abbey, had been destroyed by the blind and perverse zeal of the reformers, and its site still remained vacant; as the Parliament had of course prohibited the raising of that monarch's statue, whose "evil

manners" alone they would have had to "live in brass;" while they carried their malice so far against his form in the same metal that they ultimately ordered the statue to be sold and broken in pieces. The present generation owe its preservation to the brazier who bought it, by name John Rivet, who, either in a spirit of loyalty, or from mere contradiction, or, may be, animated by an admiration of the workmanship, buried the figure instead of destroying it, and it was finally erected in the year 1678.

The façade of the palace fronting the river was of immense extent, though never completed in accordance with the original design. The banquetting-hall, facing the street, at the present day the chapel of Whitehall, and the only part of this pile of building which the fire of 1697 left uninjured, was the portion of the magnificent plan of Inigo Jones which alone was ever perfected. It seems to have been by a strange refinement of vulgar mockery, that this gorgeous apartment, of which the ceiling had been painted by Rubens in an allegoric representation of the apotheosis of King James I. should have been chosen as the platform from which his far more pious and saintly

successor should step forth to bow his neck beneath the last bitter stroke of persecution; for it was in the walls of this chamber that the opening was made to the scaffold, the latter extending along its front from the centre to the north end, on the level of the top of the lower windows.

The high road, or strand, leading from Charing Cross to the City gate, was already crowded, on the south side, by the splendid mansions of the great nobility, whose gardens reached the water-side, each provided with stairs for the convenience of taking boat, and was rapidly assuming the form of a regular street. The line of houses forming the north side was also backed by several newly erected buildings, gradually forming into streets. St. Martin's Lane, Drury Lane, &c., were already completed; and St. Martin's Church—not the beautiful edifice which now forms no inconsiderable elevation in the plan of the quadrangle called Trafalgar Square, but a previous erection—had been recently enlarged and improved to accommodate the increasing population of the locality.

Thus the cities of London and Westminster, at one time esteemed sufficiently distant to induce

the traveller between them to halt for refreshment at the village of Charing, were now connected by a chain of buildings which graced the noble Thames, or, in some places, rather disgraced it, from the former royal abode of the Tower to the ancient Palace of Westminster.

The latter city consisted of few and insignificant streets and rows, clustering round the old Palace, no longer a royal residence at the time of which we treat, but already applied to its present purposes, the sittings of the houses of Parliament and of the courts of law. Here also was the celebrated and justly execrated Star-Chamber.

Round these and their far more magnificent and venerable neighbour, the Abbey, the purlieus of Westminster extended; and from a narrow row or alley emerging into King Street, there issued on the evening in question—we mean that memorable, though melancholy, evening which we indicated at the beginning of our chapter, but from which we have at some length digressed—two females; though the huge mantles in which they were enveloped, and the hoods and veils which were closely drawn over their faces, would have prevented any curious observer from identifying them.

They were followed by an attendant, of whose figure nothing more could be ascertained than that it was below the middle size, and whose awkwardness of gait was occasioned or increased by a huge sword, which dangled between his legs as if an unaccustomed appurtenance to the wearer, and therefore not as yet provided with a proper position in the economy of his toilet. He carried in his hand a lantern of the description then called a Guy Faux, provided with flaps to prevent the egress of light when occasion demanded concealment; in short, much the same apparatus which we most correctly and consistently term a dark lantern, meaning thereby to express that the lantern alone is light, every person and thing, excepting it, being dark. However, the attendant, on the night in question, was observed to be more than usually chary of the "little candle" contained in his lantern; for if by chance another passenger approached, the jealous retainer lost no time in drawing the thick blinds over the light, and ever and anon edging himself between the ladies he attended, and all who might approach them, as if for their protection from intrusive gaze or question.

The party proceeded along King Street, and emerged into the broad opening before the palace of Whitehall, at present, as we have said, the scene of unusual stir and excitement. As they necessarily passed beneath the platform which already protruded from the walls of the palace, one of the females shuddered, and tottering, leaned for a moment against the wall for support; but not a word was spoken. She recovered in a few seconds; but the circumstance, owing to the abundance of light necessary to the workmen, was not unobserved. A bystander gave vent to the long-suppressed feeling which had been rankling at his heart.

“Aye, aye, mistress! you’d lay down your life to save him—so would I. A curse on these murderers! and may they none of them die in their beds!”

But the poor man suffered for his rashness; for a blow from the mail-clad hand of an Ironside trooper felled him to the earth; and the trio hastened on in silence.

Parties of soldiers were patrolling the streets at intervals, and the Palace in particular was closely watched; for it was rumoured that in the earlier part of the day the outraged feelings of

the citizens had threatened to explode in a manner little conformable to the views of the ruling powers. Other and more powerful adherents of fallen majesty were said to be abroad in disguise, concerned in plots for the deliverance of Charles even at the last hour; and, in order to counteract their alleged conspiracies, spies of the regicide faction were circulated under every possible costume throughout the metropolis, directed to spare no means of ascertaining and securing the persons of the noble, but unfortunate Cavaliers. So that suspicion and mistrust dwelt on every countenance, and in each word of communication between man and man there was danger.

Prudently, therefore, avoiding all collision, the party under our notice proceeded onwards until they reached the turn leading to Spring Gardens. This they took, and after following its course for a short time, they found themselves in the ample enclosure of St. James's Park.

Destitute, until the succeeding reign, of the noble avenues, as well as of the canal, which have so greatly added to its attractions, this park, at the time of our story, was but a broad bowling-green, furnishing a space for rides or promenades

to the courtiers of Whitehall and St. James's, or for their entertainment in the games of agility and strength, then still in vogue. Dark and gloomy as was the wide area when our party entered upon it, they proceeded, as those who knew it well, to cross it directly towards the site of St. James's Palace. A distant hum of human voices, and, as they drew near, a glimmering of light through the dense atmosphere, marked the spot where the royal representative of the Stuarts and the Tudors had spent the last few weeks of a tedious and harrassing captivity, and to which he had been reconducted after his iniquitous trial and condemnation.

It was at this Palace, presented by James I. to Henry, Prince of Wales, his eldest son, that that young Prince had died; and its courtly halls, as well as the adjoining precincts, had been the scene of many of Charles's youthful pleasures and pastimes. Melancholy was the contrast on this dreary night, when it constituted his last sad prison!

Such were the thoughts which swelled the hearts of those, who now, amid the darkness and gloom, approached the heavy pile of building,

and, entering the yard, made for one of the inferior portals. They were immediately hailed by a sentinel, who demanded the pass-word.

"We know it not," replied one of the females, and, by the ample dimension of person which the cloak covered, apparently the elder. "Our errand is with his Majesty; but we would first speak with Colonel Tomlinson."

"Without the watch-word? Speak to the devil, dame, for you're more likely to get an audience of him than of Colonel Tomlinson; and, may be, he'd give you fairer welcome. As for the man, Charles Stuart, I'm thinking he's other fish to fry this night, than to be chaffering with every baggage that chooses to have an errand with him. So, a good even to ye, dames."

The man, who apparently had been successful in his attempts at banishing the external cold by plentiful internal applications of aqua vitæ, after uttering this insolent speech, resumed his drowsy and careless position; and, wrapped in his cloak, sank into a corner, where he continued to inhale copious effusions of the aromatic weed from a long pipe. The lady made another effort.

“You seem to doubt our quality, my good friend. Without further parley, then, let me tell you that I am his Majesty’s laundress, and have some of his goods in keeping which I would restore. The work of an honest woman that, I trow. And if ye can get this damsel access to the royal apartments with or without your Colonel’s leave, ye shall have gold enough to pay the service.”

“Damsel!—Gold!” exclaimed the half intoxicated man, and with a sudden spring, he approached the younger female, and dashed the ashes from his pipe into her face, as if to catch a glimpse of it through their light. The veil, which concealed and protected her features, formed a resting place for some of the sparks, and, in a moment, the thin texture was in a flame. The young lady uttered a slight but suppressed scream, and her companion a louder one; but their attendant, with the speed of lightning, darted forward, and succeeded in disengaging the veil ere the fire had communicated with any other part of her dress excepting her hood, which was slightly burnt; and, being rapidly torn from her head by her companion, it freed the bright fair ringlets,

which fell about her neck in all directions, and disclosed to view a lovely countenance, now pale with terror and agitation.

The brutal soldier would have saluted her, but the strong arm of the lady's attendant threw him backwards. A scuffle was likely to ensue; but the noise of the ladies' screams, and the previous disturbance, had awakened the vigilance of Colonel Tomlinson; and that officer himself appeared, and inquired the cause of the uproar.

"Cause!" stammered out the sentinel, "why, d'ye see, Colonel, the cause is that these here dames comes straight and asks to see the King: which is a thing impossible, since, as you and I know, Colonel, there is no King—and him that was once called so, they may see to-morrow morning, if they look out. But not satisfied with that, they go a step further, and wants to speak with Colonel Tomlinson himself. 'Give the pass-word,' says I; but no password had they to give, save this fellow's strong arm, which had like to have laid me quiet at my post, if your honour had not come in time. So, in pure self-defence, I threw the pretty wench there a few live sparks to warm her, and light her home. And therefore

she gave tongue enough to frighten the whole palace."

The superior officer thus addressed was a prim and somewhat hard-featured man; with the low forehead and thin compressed lips which betoken a character by nature narrow and contracted. His countenance, however, was not marked by the traits either of vulgarity or of cruelty. He listened attentively to the soldier's tale, then turned to the females for explanation.

"Under your favour, Colonel Tomlinson," said the elder, "this soldier deserves castigation; first, for being drunk upon his post, and next, for offering insult to respectable individuals—nay, even endangering their lives; for this young maiden's veil and hood have been the sacrifice to his brutal folly; and, but for timely aid, her whole person must have been in a flame. Our object with him and with you is to gain the damsel a few minute's speech with his Majesty, since she has property to restore to the King, which has been in her and my keeping. I am Lady Wheeler, and have been honoured for many years with the office of laundress to his most sacred Majesty—and this young person is a ward of mine."

“The greater your sin, madam, if you teach her such profane and worldly jargon as to apply the term ‘sacred,’ to designate the wearer of that poor bauble of a crown, which, look ye, I could fit upon my mongrel dog. For the rest,”—added he drily,—“him ye call King ye cannot see: he hath but now dismissed his children, and hath steadfastly refused to see other of his relations. So be counselled, and depart.”

“For the love of Heaven!” said the maiden, hastily advancing, as she saw Colonel Tomlinson turning away,—“hear me for a moment. If you have the heart of a man—in pity to yonder noble victim—in pity to me—bear this ring to his Majesty; and if after viewing it he still deny me an interview, then will I at once leave this place.”

Arrested by the earnestness of her manner, and yet more by her exceeding beauty, Colonel Tomlinson suffered her to place the ring in his hand without reply.

He looked into her face for a moment or two; and it seemed as if he read there arguments for acceding to her proposal; for, merely saying,—“At any rate, young mistress, you and your

companions may abide under a better shelter,"— he led the way through the guard-room and several long corridors to a staircase, which they ascended, following him; and soon found themselves in a comfortable and well-furnished apartment, where it appeared the Colonel himself, or some one high in office, was accustomed to dwell: for here was an ample hearth of fire; and the lamps shone upon a pair of pistols, loaded and primed, which lay upon the table, by the side of a drawn sword. Here also were wine flagons and tobacco pipes; and the whole was a refined repetition of the scene which they had encountered in the guard-room below. But Colonel Tomlinson thought, as Burke has since said, that "Vice loses half its evil by losing all its grossness."

Lady Wheeler probably indulged some sentiment of a similar nature. On the Colonel's leaving the apartment, in pursuance, as it seemed, of the commission with which the maiden had entrusted him, she comfortably established herself in a spacious chair next the fire-place, and, extending her hands to warm, said to her companion,—

“ More decent quarters than just now seemed likely. But what does my ward propose to do now?—for that stiff-necked, sharp-nosed Puritan Colonel has no intention of carrying your ring to his Majesty, I dare avow ; and I am at a loss to conjecture for what purpose we are accommodated with an apartment in the Royal Palace of St. James’s, unless it be as a step towards a lodging in the Tower. On my allegiance, young lady, I begin to repent accompanying you on this errand. But in the name of all that is wonderful, what sport can you be seeking behind that dusty arras?”

The Lady Katharine Wentworth—for our readers, we hope, will have guessed that it was she—turned quickly round, and placing her finger upon her lips, looked towards the door. The attendant, in whom the sagacious reader may likewise have recognised Pierre, and who had, on Lady Wheeler’s mention of imprisonment, instinctively seized one of the pistols, now advanced towards the door, and closing it, placed himself against it. The young lady approached her companion, and spoke softly :

“ Neither mirth nor sport, dear Lady Wheeler,

—God forbid I should think of either at such an hour! But I know the palace well. The chamber we now occupy I have frequently been in during my childhood; and it has, as I well remember, a communication, by a concealed staircase, with the apartments which, Herbert informed us yesterday, were occupied by his Majesty. On this account, doubtless, it is fixed upon by the Colonel as his own post; and little does he guess that any of those he has introduced into it are in the secret. If you will consent to wait here under Pierre's protection, I will adventure reaching the King's apartments by this passage. Like yourself, I am persuaded Colonel Tomlinson's purpose is not to show the ring,—at least to his Majesty."

"A pretty adventure, truly! And if the vinegar-faced Colonel should re-enter during your absence——?"

"I will use all despatch,—but—but if you are under the necessity of accounting for my absence, say the truth at once—that I knew the royal road, and have taken it."

"And the consequences to myself, young lady,—they may not be so summarily despatched."

“ Oh, dearest lady, you were ignorant of my purpose, you know. You were not in the secret of the passage, and could not follow to dissuade me from the enterprise. I had disappeared before you were aware. Seriously, my kind friend,” said Katharine, bending lower towards Lady Wheeler, “ would you not,—I know you would,—risk something to serve our dear, dear master !”

“ Aye, damsel, else wherefore have I accompanied thee here to-night, at the risk of suffering insult and captivity,—to say nothing of present dangers from frost without the walls and fire within. But thou art a coaxing minx, and must have thy way. And now tell me, wise one, how dost thou propose to secure thine own safety ? Say thou shouldest meet adventures in thy flight, and encounter other sentinels like our friend there below : what is to be thy tale ?”

“ The staircase leads upon the anteroom, where only Herbert is likely to be. But should I meet with guards, the very circumstance of my having reached this private entrance will be my warrant, as none but Colonel Tomlinson could have introduced me ; and the guards, as thou knowest,

dear dame, are changed every night, so can be but little versed in these matters. I will, however, wrap myself in the Colonel's cloak, which he has left here, and his cap may not be amiss, and may save me questions. Exchange, thou knowest, dame, is no robbery, and the Colonel has my ring."

So saying, the maiden adopted the expedient which her quick wit had suggested to her, and, adding to her other accoutrements the vast military cloak and towering cap of Colonel Tomlinson, she presented an exterior sufficiently portly to escape suspicion, in spite of her want of height.

"Nay, maiden, take the sword too; and thou wilt be a true son of Mars," said Lady Wheeler.

"Better, perhaps, that I should," returned Katharine, as she took the weapon from the hands of the other. "And now farewell, dame. Remember, I am acting against thy counsel and approval."

"God speed thee, child! Thou bearest a true heart and a fond one," said the lady, as she beheld Katharine, approaching the arras, draw back a part which seemed to cover nothing but a huge clock fixed in the wall.

The Lady Katharine touched the minute hand of the machine, and a door beneath flew open; when, lo! instead of pendulum and weight, appeared the lowest steps of a narrow and precipitous staircase.

The maiden turned towards Pierre, and signed to him to lend her his lantern. Provided with this she disappeared; and the next moment, by her arrangement in the interior, together with Pierre's on the outside, all was in the same state in which it had been when the party entered the chamber,—Lady Wheeler heaving a deep sigh as she finished speaking, and composing herself, with no small apprehension, to await the return of Colonel Tomlinson.

CHAPTER V.

Great, Good, and Just ! Could I but rate
My grief, and thy too rigid fate,
I'd weep the world in such a strain,
As it should deluge once again :
But since thy loud-tongued blood demands supplies,
More from Briareus' hands than Argus' eyes,
I'll sing thine obsequies with trumpet sounds,
And write thine epitaph in blood and wounds.

JAMES, MARQUIS OF MONTROSE.

MEANTIME our heroine, who was well acquainted with every turn and winding of the Palace, proceeded cautiously to ascend the staircase. It was long and very steep, landing on several narrow passages, but leading to no frequented part of the building.

Encumbered with her unaccustomed burden of a sword, as well as a lantern, Katharine had some difficulty in gaining the summit. As she approached the door at the head, the maiden drew

down the flaps of her lantern, her principal fear having been that other sentinels might be posted at the door of the chamber; but this was not the case, for the passage was believed to be unknown to all who might wish to enter the royal apartments; and for the purpose of egress for those within, it would have been useless, as far as concealment was concerned, since it continued no further than the room in which Colonel Tomlinson had established himself, and the guarded corridors of the palace were all to pass ere escape was possible.

The staircase was, therefore, left unguarded; and Katharine, who had dreaded the treacherous tones of her own voice, had she been forced to reply to the challenge of a sentinel, laid her hand on the latch with a heart which beat audibly, and with a breath failing through fear and exhaustion. Trembling at every creak in the old boards of the stairs and galleries, and fearful of being at last disappointed of the object for which she had risked so much, the maiden, on finding that the door was bolted in the interior, shook it with a strength which the highly-wrought state of her nerves lent her for the moment.

There was a stir within, and almost immediately the door was opened by the King's faithful valet, Herbert, who on recognising the dress of Colonel Tomlinson, proceeded to state his master's prohibition against all visitors, and his desire that his last hours of prayer and meditation might not be interrupted.

Katharine was about to reply; but perceiving that Herbert was not alone she entered silently, and found that even the monarch's ante-chamber was not secured from the intrusion of guards, two of whom were there posted, as nearly as Katharine could ascertain through the clouds of smoke from their pipes which filled the chamber, the fumes of which penetrated even to the royal presence!

We have said before—or our heroine said for us—that the personal guards of the King were daily changed, through fear that the fortitude of the royal sufferer might touch their hearts, and so corrupt their fidelity to the cause of rebellion. Such being the case, the present sentinels on duty knew little more than that the door through which Katharine entered was an entrance sacred to their Colonel; and when they heard Herbert address her by his name, they cared not to disturb them-

selves from the very easy quarters in which they had disposed their persons.

The Lady Katharine, therefore, on entering was not subjected to any very rigid scrutiny, though the presence of the soldiers debarred her from endeavouring by word or sign to make herself known to Herbert. Pointing, however, with the sword she held towards the door of the King's apartment, she contrived so to reveal to his vigilant eye the delicate white hand which held it, that the faithful attendant obeyed with less reluctance an order which, under other circumstances he would have had no means of resisting, and threw open the door of the King's apartment, announcing Colonel Tomlinson.

It was a spacious and lofty chamber; that last resting place of England's martyred monarch. The floor and moveables were of polished oak, relieved by rich canopies and hangings of foreign tapestry. Rugs of Turkey manufacture were spread upon the floor; and in the centre stood a massive gilded table, upon which there lay an open Bible, another volume also open, the common prayer of the Church of England, and other books; and from the ceiling immediately above,

was suspended a huge chandelier of pure silver, which emitted a brilliant light even to the most distant part of the room, and cast an almost ghastly glare upon the countenance of the individual who was standing beneath it.

This was Bishop Juxon, the metropolitan prelate, who, placed before one of the open volumes, was not, however, reading from it; but, as Katharine entered, he was reciting a prayer, which has since become familiar to all, from having been adopted as a part of the anniversary service for the 30th of January. The words which fell upon Katharine's ear were, "O gracious Lord! when thou makest inquisition for blood, lay not the guilt of this innocent blood, the shedding whereof nothing but the blood of thy Son can expiate—lay it not to the charge of the people of this land, nor let it ever be required"—but here the Bishop paused on account of her entrance.

Charles was kneeling upon one of the rugs which covered the floor, before a pile of cushions, in which his face was nearly buried, as he lay prostrate, his hands spread forth in the attitude of prayer. The clustering locks of grey, bleached,

not by age, but sorrow, fell thick upon his neck and shoulders, giving an air almost patriarchal to his attitude, as he fervently responded to the intercessory petition between his God and his people.

But the abrupt entrance of Katharine had touched the spring of the only apprehension which now remained to him. Unable to the last to convince himself that his enemies would dare to consummate his sentence in a public execution, Charles was ever on the watch in fear of assassination. The sudden opening of a door, the shooting of a bolt, or the waiving of the arras, roused the quick apprehensions of the Monarch, whose courage shrank not from death in any other shape; and, on the present occasion, he started to his feet, and, after standing still a few moments, advanced within a pace or two of the intruder.

As he did so, the light fell upon his figure, and revealed the melancholy ravages which care and sorrow had made in a frame naturally robust beyond the ordinary standard.

He wore a loose robe, or cloak, of black taffeta, lined and edged with sables, an addition which the intense cold rendered necessary. The rest of

his dress was entirely of black, and over the velvet doublet was yet arranged with nice care the turn-down collar of fine point. His figure, much attenuated by suffering, seemed taller than its wont, as he drew his mantle closer round him; and the death-like paleness of his cheeks, on which were the traces of recent tears which the mournful parting from his children had elicited; and the premature grey of the hair, which was parted on his forehead to fall in clusters down the sides of his face, gave an appearance of age to the countenance, which the expression of the features, however, in some degree belied. So earnest was the gaze of that sunken eye, whose former occasionally severe expression was now chastened into a soft, yet steadfast, sadness!—so lofty and unwrinkled still that towering forehead, where intellect yet held firm possession, in spite of the blows which might have shaken a weaker mind!

Indeed, it seemed as if the touch of adversity had swept all the harsher outlines from the form as from the spirit; and the air of princely majesty which still shone through every tone and every gesture, deprived of all collateral aids, now owed

its irresistible effect alone to the innate dignity which stamped Charles from the birth to the scaffold as one every inch a king; as well as to the exalted piety and the resignation which, so cruelly tried, proved him indeed a Christian.

He had advanced a step or two, but then stopped; and Katharine, overpowered by the feelings which his altered appearance excited in her, approached in silence the spot where he stood. He fixed his eyes inquiringly and gravely on her; then said coldly, but with that peculiar tone of courtesy which distinguished the descendant of kings, and which, during his imprisonment, was found so captivating as to alarm his enemies for the fidelity of any placed near his person—

“We had hoped, sir, to be spared this——” But he was interrupted; for the Lady Katharine, overmastered by her emotions, threw off the disguise which concealed her form and features, and with a piteous burst of anguish, sank at the Monarch’s feet.

He started back for an instant; then spoke, as if to himself.

“Surely the hand of Heaven is in this! Katharine, my child, whence come you? and how did

you gain entrance. My Lord Bishop, this is Strafford's daughter!"

"Sire, I came here tonight under the protection of Lady Wheeler, and through my knowledge of the Palace, have obtained access to your apartment. Yesterday only I arrived in London from St. Germain, with commands from my Royal Mistress, and messages which I promised to deliver at any risk. Alas! to find your Highness thus!"—and another gush of tears choked her utterance.

Deeply affected, Charles took her hand, and raised her.

"May Heaven reward you, my child!" he said, "for we no longer have the power. Yet listen to me, Katharine, and endeavour to compose yourself to answer me on all which I would ask of you. My hours, you know, are numbered. Nay, weep not so despairingly: to me the bitterness of death is past. It is not that I have outlived the world's happiness and pleasures; it is not that I have seen the jewels fall, one by one, from the diadem which my fathers bequeathed to me; and that my heartstrings have been rent asunder, as the fond

ties of domestic love have been severed; that slander, and perjury, and treason, have degraded me from a throne to a scaffold, and left no inheritance to my widow and orphans, save a dreary exile. All this, which has long rendered life but one unmingled cup of bitterness, might make me anxious to resign it; but this, my child, could not give me triumph in death. It is through the blessed words of this volume," and he laid his hand on the Scriptures—"it is through the pure faith which from my youth up I have known through the ordinances of *that*"—and he pointed to the Book of Prayer—"and, I pray thee, maiden, to record my testimony for my children's sake, and that of my subjects, hardly less dear—it is through these that I am now at this awful hour in perfect peace. Peace with God, for Christ's sake: peace with man"—he paused—"yes, with my bitterest enemies, peace—and as I freely forgive them all my sufferings, so may God forgive me!"

"Of my sins against my fellow-creatures—mark me, my child,—there is but one that haunts me in this hour of extremity, and of which I fain would hear forgiveness spoken from their lips.

Katharine Wentworth: say—will not the Earl of Strafford's children curse the memory of the unhappy sovereign who suffered the shedding of their father's blood?"

The Lady Katharine rose, and stood before the Monarch, her hands clasped together; and her previous agitation having given way to a forced calmness, though the large drops still stood upon her cheeks. The colour mounted to her brow as she spoke.

"My Lord the King," she said at length, "Heaven be my witness that the agonizing tear of filial grief has ever been unmingled with one hard thought of him who, like our blessed parent, was but the victim of a dire necessity, and who—oh! how terribly!—is expiating that involuntary error. In the name of all whom that calamity made orphans, my gracious liege,—my dear and honoured master,—I pronounce full and free forgiveness."

She paused, and Charles silently bowed his head; for the solemnity of her manner had excited feelings too powerful for utterance; and Katharine, recovering herself, spoke in a tone somewhat less serious.

“ To prove to you, sire, that our race count it a glory and a privilege to suffer,—aye, to die,—for a beloved master, I entreat your Majesty to avail yourself of the only means by which it is yet possible to escape the murderous hands of your foes. I have with me a female disguise, the best I was able to procure on reaching London ; but on my way to this chamber a happy chance placed in my power one which will serve the purpose better. Colonel Tomlinson having received from my hands my father’s signet ring, with a promise to me that he would endeavour through its means to gain me access to your Highness, and having consequently left us for a while, though evidently with a different intention, vouchsafed us the shelter of his apartment. As we waited in that chamber, however, which is the one at the foot of the staircase, it struck me that, once possessed of his outer garments, the cloak and cap, your Majesty might pass the guard, which is numerous below. This disguise served me well hither in deceiving the sentinels in the antechamber, and would, I think, enable your Majesty to pass.”

“ The scheme, sir, is not ill devised,” inter-

rupted the Bishop, "and methinks it were at least as well to try it."

"And thou, maiden—how wouldest thou escape?" demanded the King.

"Whichever disguise your Majesty should adopt, I must needs rest here," returned Katharine, "and assume, as nearly as possible, the dress your Highness now wears. For, not to mention that the guards stationed outside, having seen but one individual enter this chamber, will assuredly suffer but one to pass out; even your Majesty's privacy is evidently subject to a close espial, and one, bearing your figure, must occupy this chamber; though, doubtless, by a feigned desire for repose, and early retiring to rest, I—should your Majesty so far honour me—could escape the necessity of personally communicating with your malignant jailers, so as to leave to you, sire, from this till the dawn of morning to effect your escape, provided no unhappy chance befell you."

"It is enough, my child. Take my fervent blessing for thy fidelity and devotion; but it must not be. God forbid that Charles Stuart should seek his own safety to peril thine!"

“ Oh, say not so, my liege,—deny me not, my most dear master ! Quench not the last hope of thousands of true and loyal hearts now praying for your deliverance. Oh ! for the love of her who sent me here, and whose messages I have yet left unuttered, deny me not ! For the sake of the precious offspring, whose fate hangs on your Majesty’s existence, deny me not ! For those noble hearts who have offered themselves in your stead, and been rejected, deny me not ! For your kingdom’s sake, left to the mercy of traitors ; for your subjects, whose allegiance and affection are now turned back to you, deny me not ! On my knees I implore you, my sovereign ; I entreat you, if you would grant a boon to that house which has suffered in your cause, though not by your will—deny me not ! ”

As she spoke rapidly and vehemently, Katharine again knelt at the feet of Charles, who, himself overcome with emotion, turned his head away abruptly. Then addressing Juxon, in a hasty tone, as if fearful of trusting himself, he said—

“ My Lord Bishop, this must not be.”

The Lady Katharine required no more. She knew the tone, and was aware that in that short

but decisive sentence Charles's last hopes were gone. She rose sadly and slowly; and with a deep drawn sigh she placed in the King's hands the letters with which his consort had entrusted her—the last he was ever to receive, though Henrietta thought it not when she penned them.

Charles hastily devoured their contents; and having thus had an opportunity of recovering his self-possession, he resumed the tone of calmness with which he had first spoken. Placing a chair, he affectionately desired Katharine to be seated.

“Thou art weary, my child, and we fear this distressing scene is too much for thee. Forgive us for refusing all that thy devoted heart has led thee to offer; but either we will live as a king, or die as a gentleman; and methinks it were but an unworthy course for either to expose a delicate maiden to the tender mercies of those from whom we would ourself escape. Nay, more; if it will console thee, reflect upon the many perils which must environ us if even we succeeded in leaving these apartments. The guard below, the possibility of meeting Colonel Tomlinson himself, the soldiery stationed around, the almost impossibility of reaching the coast in safety, the degra-

dation of being recaptured and brought hither again to suffer an ignominious death—but enough. Let us speak of other things. We would charge thee with some last words to our beloved ones. To thy mistress carry this heart of brilliants, with this letter, which we have sought an opportunity of transmitting. Assure her of my everlasting love, and tell her that never for a second has my heart wandered from her; and that my last thought of earthly things will be hers. For my children—God help them! I have prepared each a legacy. This Bible to my son—and Katharine—repeat to him—repeat to them all—what we have striven so fervently to impress—that in the blessed communion of our most Holy Church of England their father found the way of salvation. As they value a parent's benediction, bid them never to renounce it. In all else we charge them to pay all duty, love, and honour to their mother; in the adoption of her creed—*never*. I speak as a dying man, when I express my presentiment that to any among them who shall be tempted to do so, ruin and woe will follow.

“But the moments are passing, and we have still somewhat to say to thee, maiden, which must

not be left unsaid. It is of thyself we would speak—nay, start not, gentle one—thou hast nought to apprehend. The Lord Bishop has, as thou see'st, retired to a distance; and thou mayest safely entrust thy secret to ears which will, a few hours hence, lie cold and deaf in the dust. Is it as we have suspected, maiden? and dost thou love the gallant young cavalier whom men call Albert Lyndesay?"

The pale cheeks of Katharine were suffused with blushes, and she covered her face with her hands. A violent trembling seized her, and it was some time before her voice would utter the avowal which never before had passed her lips.

"Sire, I do, devotedly."

"We have long seen it, my child. From the time when he found shelter under thy father's roof from the outrages of ruffianly assailants, we have marked it. And as our life hath been but adverse to thy welfare, so now we trust our death may remove the only obstacle to thy happiness."

"*You*, sire, an obstacle! Your Majesty, who has been as my father!"

"Would that such had been in our power. But

the disastrous times have forbidden it, and in solitude only have we earned that title. Yet we marvel not at thy surprise. This young soldier—tell us, maiden—hast thou held him to be but what he seemed?”

“In truth, your Majesty, when first we met, I took but little heed of his birth or lineage, till my father forbade all further intercourse, believing him to be ignoble. But my heart was given, sire. I am not now ignorant that he is nobly descended, for I heard it during my brief imprisonment in the Tower, from the lips of one who, though a murderer, and immediately afterwards a suicide, yet bore him you speak of, sire, no good-will; and would hardly have employed his last breath in a falsehood to do him honour.”

“We remember,” returned Charles, “the infamous Dominican Jacopo. He was present, a young boy, at the marriage of Albert’s parents, though we learned the fact but from the report of his confession. Maiden—*so were we*——”

“Amidst the follies and errors of our youth, none has brought on our spirit such deep repentance as our co-operation in that clandestine union,—for none led so signally to crime and sorrow:

and never have we looked upon that youth, so worthy of thy love, that our heart has not smitten us for the part we took. We had resolved to make him amends for the obscurity to which our deed had condemned him; but the only time at which he visited our Court, he left it strangely and abruptly. We partly guess the reason,—but, be that as it may, he joined the army, and long we believed him to have been numbered with the dead at Newbury. Since then the power to serve our friends has been wrested from us; and all that remains is, dying, to put a seal upon those rights, which, living, we could not have enforced.

“Listen, Katharine. Thy father himself had not desired a nobler alliance for his child than Albert Lyndesay. The blood of two illustrious houses flows in his veins; but, for reasons thou wilt hear detailed hereafter, the public marriage of his parents was a thing impossible. It was in a foreign land, although his father was a Briton; and to Britons the Prince of Wales was then, my child, a mark for honour and consideration; and these lovers thought his presence would sufficiently sanction their stolen nuptials.

Reasons of state should have deterred us from conceding this; but the love of a frolic,—the persuasions of a volatile, but warmhearted friend, and, perhaps, more than all, the romance of the whole affair,—prevailed; and we attended the marriage ceremony; on condition, however, that all present should place their hands to a solemn oath never to divulge the scene during our own lifetime. By the same oath we, on the other hand, unconditionally bound ourselves, and this irrevocable vow has kept us silent. Other witnesses there were, but all now sleep with the dead, save one, a woman, now somewhat advanced in years, who attended on the bride. Thou mayest have seen her, Katharine; for she wandered much, and her brain, which was slightly warped by the direful scenes which followed upon her mistress's ill-starred marriage, leads her to imagine that the safety of Albert in some way depends upon her. Thou hast seen her? 'Tis well—and now we bethink us, it was from herself we first learned to blend thy name with his; for Ninon never failed to report to us all that befell one whom we, no less than herself, considered as a solemn charge. Of late her

communications have, through the malice of our enemies, necessarily ceased ; yet do we know that Albert fought bravely in Scotland ; and if we mistake not, his sword hath not lain idle in the scabbard during the last heroic struggles of our friends in this realm. His reward, we trust, is at hand ; though little could any conjecture how the spell which we attributed to Ninon's crazed intellect, was to be fulfilled. We see it all now. A foolish French doggrel, gathered by Ninon from the lips of some itinerant soothsayer, asserted the apparently absurd fact, that ere this youth's birth and rank should be reclaimed, the sun should rain a shower of blood. It now occurs to us that the oath we took, surmised or whispered, may have suggested to this sage astrologer the idea of weaving the child's fate with that of a sovereign, whose death was alone to clear the mystery of his descent ; and the sun is a favorite symbol to typify the monarch, as I need not tell thee, with our Gallic neighbours. Surely the blood to be shed tomorrow fully accomplishes the rest. A little cunning, and a little hardness, and, may be, a suggestion of the Evil One,—though we credit not astrology or second sight,—may have sufficed

for the combination of this seemingly wild prediction. Or it may be, that when kings, the Lord's anointed, bow their heads under the violence of their people, strange presentiments and warning voices, out of the usual course of things, are permitted to usher in so awful a catastrophe. Many omens, inexplicable on any other ground, have occurred to ourself personally. But away with this subject. The spell of Albert's nativity will be cancelled at our death, be this wild legend applicable or not; and thou hast, my child, our full and free consent,—the consent of thy sovereign,—the consent of thy late father, for which we willingly stand pledged,—to wed that brave and generous young soldier whenever love and duty shall find circumstances propitious. And our blessing,—the last blessing of a master you have loved and served to the death,—be upon you both!

“Meantime, maiden, we commit to thy hands these papers,”—the King unlocked a bureau and took out a closely sealed packet—“which we charge thee to deliver into the hands of our son, thy King, henceforth. They contain the proofs of that transaction; proofs which no eye must see

previously to that of our successor. Should these by any chance miscarry, be lost, or destroyed, you, my Lord Bishop, will 'remember.'"

Juxon, who, at a sign from Charles had come forward during the latter part of the King's discourse, bowed his head in acquiescence; and Katharine, unable to express the feelings which swelled her overflowing heart, kissed the King's hand, on which her tears flowed fast. He laid his other hand on her head, and all were silent, as if in mental prayer. The pause was broken by a sound of voices in the anteroom, and Katharine quickly resumed her disguise.

It was well that she did so; for Herbert, who, after some resistance, loud enough to warn those within, at length opened the door, announced with indignation, that the guards had insisted upon looking at intervals into the King's chamber, to ascertain that all was secure.

"They but obey their orders," remarked the King. "We wish you a good evening, Colonel Tomlinson."

Charles waived his hand. The maiden understood the signal as intimating that her longer stay would excite suspicion. Yet she lingered; and when at length she reached the door of the

apartment, turned again to take a last look at those features so deeply venerated.

The anguish of that moment had almost betrayed her; but Charles, who saw the struggle, advanced calmly towards her, and, with his eyes earnestly fixed upon her face, he said in a voice loud enough to be heard by all, clear and melodious as a spirit's tone—

“‘Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day.’”

Poor Katharine! the last accents of that calm sweet voice rang in her ears for many a year afterwards. But before she was conscious of what was passing, she found herself again upon the staircase, and the careful hand of Herbert had drawn the bolts, which precluded all ingress from that passage without warning.

Almost beside herself with grief, Katharine groped her way through the galleries and staircase, when, arriving at the bottom, she applied a light rap to the door at the back of the clock, not without apprehension that she might receive but a rough answer.

To her surprise, however, the low knocking was answered from within; and when, by the

assistance of Pierre, she had disengaged herself from the passage, she found that all remained exactly as she had left it; Colonel Tomlinson not having yet returned, and Lady Wheeler having quietly resigned herself to a comfortable dose, from which the entrance of our heroine hardly served to awaken her.

They waited some time longer; and when at length Colonel Tomlinson reappeared, he seemed much hurried, and, looking round the room, hastily bade them leave the Palace.

"But my ring?" demanded Katharine; "have you, sir, fulfilled my errand?"

"Your ring is already in other hands. I but act according to orders. Ask me no questions, young lady, but depart whilst you may do so with safety."

Lady Wheeler waited not for another hint, but proceeded to equip herself and Katharine with their wrappings; and the maiden, whose only object in seeking the Palace had been to obtain an interview with the illustrious prisoner, and, if possible, to co-operate in his escape, was not slow to leave a spot where there was nought left to hope.

But when she afterwards reflected on the

scene, the conduct of Colonel Tomlinson appeared to her inexplicable. Her ring he had evidently transmitted to some higher in authority than himself, and from whom he apprehended danger to her, as appeared by his warning her to quit the Palace. Meantime he had left her in a situation, and for a space of time which had given her ample opportunity of executing whatever plans she might have formed in Charles's behalf; and that, as she conjectured, not without some guess at her purpose, both from the change in his manner when first he saw her ring, and from the vague look of inquiry with which he had regarded the arras alternately with herself when he so hastily re-entered. Could it be that he was disappointed at finding her in that chamber? And, if so, had he thus given her an opportunity only to entangle her more deeply in the meshes of danger? or was it that, like so many others, even Colonel Tomlinson's uncompromising nature had yielded to the seducing influence of Charles's gentle manners and patient magnanimity, and that that officer would gladly have promoted the King's escape, could he have ensured himself unharmed? The latter suspicion, perhaps, was the true one.

CHAPTER VI.

Horror covers all the heath,
Clouds of carnage blot the sun,
Sisters, weave the web of death !
Sisters, cease ! the work is done.

GRAY.

SINCE the day when, on the rejection of Cromwell's unworthy proposal, our hero and heroine had taken a sorrowful farewell in the Tower, they had never met! The Lady Katharine had followed her royal mistress to St. Germain, where they anxiously awaited the termination of a war whose every event from that time forwards threatened but to retard the consummation so earnestly desired; while Albert Lyndesay—for so we must still designate him—warm in the career of victory which everywhere crowned the royal cause in Scotland, shared the sanguine anticipations

of his illustrious leader, that each battle might prove the last, ere success should open to them a path through which to carry their prowess to the aid of the gallant cavaliers of South Britain, and in conjunction with them to re-establish the monarch in his prerogative and rights.

Sharing in these anticipations, we say, our hero was animated throughout that desperate struggle by the hope that, when he again should meet the object of his love, he should have rendered himself worthy in all honour and distinction to ask that hand which he would have disdained to receive from any but her natural protectors, even had the proposal of Oliver Cromwell not involved the disgraceful alternative which he annexed to it.

The downfall of the royal party in England, however, and the consequent defeat of Montrose's forces at Philiphaugh put an end to these pleasing reveries; and, in the stead of the proud position to which he had looked forward, as one of the most energetic of the restorers of fallen monarchy, Albert found himself in that of a fugitive, without home or friends; his party scattered, his almost idolized commander an exile,

and the Monarch in whose cause they had fought together, a prisoner in the hands of their ruthless foes.

Since the fatal pacification, which had for one of its principal articles the banishment of Scotland's glorious hero from his native land, left his followers at liberty to dispose of themselves as they thought proper, Montrose, who had laid down his arms at a command from his Majesty—involuntarily exacted as he believed—would not as yet abandon the hope of interposing successfully between his royal master and the fate that awaited him.

It was, therefore, by his desire that Albert remained in Scotland, and negotiated on the part of Montrose with the chiefs attached to the royal cause, various schemes for the deliverance of their sovereign. No unsuspected communication could now be received from Charles; and his faithful adherents, therefore, caused to be laid before the Queen in his stead those proposals which, ably conducted and executed, promised fair to enable them once more to make a head against the destroyers of the constitution and monarchy.

Either ill advised, however, or unduly influ-

enced by minor considerations, Henrietta failed in the judgment and decision to meet the crisis. She trifled with the proposals of the chiefs, and yielded not a ready sanction, and the time for action passed by.

The King was sold to the parliament; and the Marquis of Montrose, foiled in every attempt to devote himself to the cause of his beloved master, and unable to return to Scotland, accepted service under the Emperor Ferdinand III., who bestowed on him the patent of Field-marshal of the Empire. It was, however, with an ulterior view to the interests of his own sovereign that the Marquis took this step, which he hoped would place him at the head of troops, so raised, and placed in such quarters, as might be available to Charles in case of emergency.

Meantime, Albert Lyndesay, watching the last flickerings of the expiring flame of loyalty in Britain, was found successively engaged in each attempt which the sanguine or despairing partisans of Charles at this time made for his relief. Having once more passed into England he joined alike the ranks of the Kentish Royalists under the Earl of Norwich, who were

preparing to coalesce with the invading army, which the Duke of Hamilton, with the strange inconsistency which had marked his whole conduct, now led to the assistance of the royal cause, those of the Earl of Holland, and of the brave but ill-fated Francis, Lord Villiers. When all had successively failed, he yet built hopes of future action on the measures of one of the two heroic leaders with whom seemed to rest Charles's last hopes.

“There's Erin's high Ormond, and Scotland's Montrose.”

But before either of these devoted servants could afford him aid, Charles's doom was fixed!

It was on the fatal morning, that left on the British annals the foul stain which centuries may not efface; and the street before Whitehall, with every avenue leading thereto, was thickly lined with soldiers; file upon file being ranged from the spot which was to mark the tragedy to the utmost distance on every side to which the accents of a human voice might reach, (a precaution necessary, lest the dying tones of the exalted sufferer should rouse sympathies too tumultuous to be repressed,) that a young man, negligently attired in the dress of the Highland

riflemen, approached the military outposts on the side of the Holbein-gate. His countenance was pale and haggard, and his whole mien denoted one so intensely absorbed by his own reflections, as to be insensible to what was passing around him. Once within sight of the Palace, he remained rivetted to the spot, his arms crossed upon his chest, and his eyes fixed with a look of despair, almost fearful to witness, upon the gloomy stage of death which protruded from that regal pile. As he leaned against the portico under the partial shadow of the gateway, his dark hair thrown back from the forehead, and his eyes strained with eagerness; the sorrowing and horror-struck expression of the whole figure might have furnished a subject worthy the pencil of Murillo.

It was not long ere he attracted notice. The soldiers pointed him out to their comrades with suspicious looks, and the deathlike stillness which prevailed on that morning over the assembled multitude was broken occasionally, near the spot where he stood, by a whispered suggestion or remark. But of this he was unconscious, and might have remained so, until suspicion had

worked itself into certainty to his peril, had he not felt his sleeve plucked on a sudden by one who had approached in the press unobserved, and who relinquished not his hold upon him, as he whispered in his ear,—

“Major Lyndesay,—are you mad, or do you court death, that you thus expose yourself to an inevitable fate? For God’s sake, follow me.”

The speaker was not to be resisted, for he accompanied his words by a compulsory action, which forced our hero from the spot, liable as he was, in his then state of mind, to become subject to any external agency. He had sought the scene in a condition bordering on distraction, and remained bound as by a spell; and, still unconscious of his destination, and seemingly lost in a dream, he allowed himself to be led away by the individual who had laid so strong a grasp upon him.

This person, apparently an officer, but who wore a long mantle, which concealed any peculiarities of uniform which might have distinguished him, after extricating our hero and himself from the immediate neighbourhood of the armed force, struck down one of the narrow

streets, with which the purlieus of Westminster abounded, and which was also crowded with passengers to or from the scene of the fatal catastrophe.

The change of place seemed first to rouse Lyndesay from the trance in which he was lost, and, suddenly turning towards his guide, he said,—

“Why did you lead me away? and where are we going?”

“To *save* you, Major Lyndesay, as I would have done once before, had you permitted me. And my object now is, if possible, by a circuitous route, to reach my own dwelling unobserved.”

“And who can you be, that would on this day render a service to one of my unhappy party? Do you not fear to entangle yourself in the meshes which are every where spread for our destruction?”

“For that, I must depend on your prudence and circumspection, should we succeed in reaching my abode in safety. From my family, your own deeds have already ensured you a warm welcome; and we owe you a deep debt of gratitude; though, perhaps, you knew not, that in

interposing between the ruthless soldier and the defenceless woman, between the spoiler and the innocent and unprotected, on one occasion of your career, you saved from misery and desolation the family of an old companion in arms, Colonel Campbell. Nay, no apologies, my friend. In your present state of mind, I could not have expected you to recognise your own father. You start again,—perhaps my name is to you but a poor guarantee for the sincerity of my professions. I must tell you then, briefly, that I no longer follow my Chief of Argyle. I would have served him to the death, but he imposed dishonour, and we parted company. Enough of this. Accident brought me to London; and here I abide, since our mountains afford but sorry refuge to those on whom the great Mac Cullum More has bent the weight of his deadly frown. Here I dwell obscure and unsuspected, and it remains with you to avail yourself of so humble a shelter for your present need. First, however, let us exchange mantles, as in recognition the danger is your own.”

Surprised as Lyndesay had been at the whole

of Colonel Campbell's information, no less than at the meeting with him, he yet was too much engrossed with the primary object of his feelings to ponder upon it very deeply; and, accordingly, was preparing mechanically to comply with the Colonel's suggestion, when, at the turning of one of those numerous narrow lanes leading down to the water side, they encountered an object which gave at once a new course to Lyndesay's attention.

This was no other than the page Pierre, the faithful follower and unfailing friend of former days. He was proceeding stealthily, and, peering anxiously on all sides, seemed, as he drew his cloak tighter around him, to shrink from the observation which his ungainly figure excited.

In a moment Lyndesay's hand was on his shoulder; and the dwarf, at first startled by the sudden arrest, no sooner looked up into Albert's face, than his own was lighted with a gleam of gladness which veiled its deformity. The expansion of heart consequent upon just and true affections, with an increased intercourse with the world, and consciousness of usefulness to those he

loved, had, indeed, considerably softened the naturally harsh features of the poor dwarf; and his countenance, ever strongly expressive, had become almost interesting from the intensity of the emotions which were displayed there, in the absence of the usual organs of demonstration.

"Thy mistress!—is she here?—and well,—and——" the word trembled upon Albert's tongue, but he stopped abruptly. The page looked at Colonel Campbell.

"A friend," returned our hero in answer to the look. Immediately Pierre pointed towards the river, and then, stepping in that direction, motioned Albert to follow him.

The appeal was not to be resisted. Concealment, safety—life itself—was not to be weighed in the balance.

Lyndesay cordially grasped the hand of Colonel Campbell for a moment.

"Forgive me, if I seem ungrateful; but I cannot accept your generosity. I thank you no less—Farewell." And in a moment the pair had disappeared, and the veteran was left alone.

"Sure none but the devil or a woman ever wrought such folly!" exclaimed the old soldier.

“The very sight of this imp seems to have driven the lad wild; though, as far as I could comprehend, the creature never spoke to him; and what he asked of the dwarfish monster I could not hear. Either the youth is possessed or—but I will not give up the chase. And warrants out, too, for his apprehension!”

This was partly uttered, partly only thought; since there are some particulars with respect to our absent friends, which it is wiser not to proclaim in the midst of a crowded thoroughfare.

Meantime our hero followed his guide through various intricate windings which conducted at length to the edge of the river. There, under cover of a low shed, a small boat was moored; and Pierre, loosing it from its fastenings, immediately took the oars, and motioned Lyndesay to place himself.

The signal was obeyed almost before given, and soon the small craft began to skim the surface of the water in the direction of the city of London. To accomplish this route, they had to pass before the broad façade of the palace of Whitehall, which fronted the river. All was still as the grave. Many vessels were afloat, and

the shore was lined with soldiers; but, save an occasional word from the officers on duty, or the splash from the oars of a passing boat, not a sound interrupted the chilling silence which seemed to have struck even to the hearts of men on that morning.

Lyndesay hid his face in his hands, and, as they passed the edifice, recollections came over him, which broke the stupor in which he had hitherto been held, and he wept like a child. Probably to the circumstance of the concealment of his features, as well as to the caution of Pierre in avoiding encounter with any other vessel, it was owing, that they passed unquestioned, and arrived safely at one of the numerous flights of steps which broke the shore on the side of the Strand.

Here the page again committed the boat to its moorings, and, ascending the steps, they proceeded to cross the terrace and gardens of Somerset House; not, however, apparently, with intent to enter the noble palace which appertained to them, and which at that time had fallen to the crown; for, leaving the enclosure by a small postern, and crossing the court, they passed through the outer gate into the Strand.

Nearly opposite to this portal, at the junction of Drury Lane and Wych Street, stood Craven House, a solid mansion of red brick faced with stone, and presenting a spacious front with sashed windows. Portions of this building remained until a comparatively recent period, and a part of it, by the name of the Queen of Bohemia's Head, was converted into an inn.* But at the time of our tale it was in the possession of the Earl of Craven, whose name has since designated a street in its vicinity, and whose portrait was long preserved on the wall at the end of Craven Buildings. The erection had previously been known as Drury House, where dwelt the potent family of the Druries, and had been distinguished as the head-quarters of Essex's faction at the latter end of the reign of Elizabeth.

At present its external appearance denoted it tenantless. Neither bolt nor bar was undrawn: the lower windows were closely defended by shutters, and all seemed to demonstrate that the Monarch's fate had served as a warning to one whom men believed attached to him by the near tie of alliance with his sister, the noble owner of

* The site is now occupied by the Olympic Theatre.

this mansion, and that by timely flight he had avoided the coming storm.

It was towards this house, however, that the steps of Pierre, and consequently of our hero, were directed. Passing the principal entrance, the page led the way to a small garden door, (most of the houses of the period had extensive gardens) of which he possessed the key, and the ingress or egress by which excited no notice, as he was merely supposed to be the gardener.

Carefully, however, bolting the portal in the interior, he quickly led the way to the entrance of the mansion from the garden side. All was dark and cold, and they traversed two or three gloomy passages before arriving at a hall or gallery, lighted from the roof, in which was placed the grand staircase.

This they quickly mounted, and stood on the gallery above, which was adorned with numerous and valuable paintings, chiefly of the Dutch and Flemish schools. The well-known portrait of Elizabeth of Bohemia, by Vandyck, stood prominent.

But Lyndesay had no time, even had he at the moment possessed the inclination, to linger

amongst these works of art. Immediately on reaching the gallery, the page threw open a door, which disclosed to his view subjects of more interest than pencil could portray.

The room was large, and richly furnished according to the taste of the day. Unlike the lower part of the house, it bore the appearance of habitation, and the light entered freely through four large windows, which occupied the length of it on one side. Notwithstanding the inclemency of the weather, one of these was open; and in the embrasure of this, her head resting on her hand, which was placed on the parapet, and her whole frame stretched forward in the attitude of eager listening, sat the Lady Katharine Wentworth.

She was attired in the deepest mourning, which heightened the deathlike paleness of her cheeks, and exhibited to advantage the beautiful proportions of her form. On the opening of the door she turned slightly, as if scarce conscious of the interruption; but, perceiving Lyndesay, she hastily started from her seat. In an instant the pale lips, cheeks, and brow were suffused with a hasty flush, and as quickly it vanished.

Just then the fatal roar of the signal guns

came booming over the water. The blow was struck, — the nation was orphaned. Albert sprang forward in time to save the fainting form of Katharine, as she fell senseless to the ground.

* * * * *

It was more than an hour after, and the anxious efforts of her attendant had hitherto failed in restoring consciousness to the Lady Katharine, when she made a faint attempt at articulation, which even then hardly bespoke restoration.

“Is it over?” she whispered, shuddering;— then added, in a tone of anguish, “The King—our master——

“Is in heaven!” solemnly responded Lyndesay, advancing towards her from the spot where he had been watching her revival with painful suspense, fearful of presenting himself before her.

The sight of him—his voice—his words, opened the flood-gates of memory, and a copious gush of tears succeeded. She rose, however; and dismissing her attendant, took the seat which Lyndesay placed for her within the air of the window. Long and bitterly she wept, and her lover attempted not to interrupt the natural flow of

grief. He knew that such sorrow must have vent.

“Katharine!” at length he said, “oh, tell me, may I still call you *my* Katharine?”

She placed her hand in his, and turned her still tearful eyes upon him; and that look spoke more than ten thousand words.

“Then you are mine, dearest; mine from this hour, and from believing myself the most bereft of men, I now hold a treasure of which the very possession makes me tremble. I have loved you long without hope, yet has the thought of you nerved me in the hour of danger, and cheered me in the hour of sorrow, and guarded me in the hour of temptation. I have looked at this precious amulet,” and he drew from his bosom the cherished lock of hair, “and for the sake of her who gave it, my heart has melted towards the woman whose home was a prey to pillage and plunder. I have imaged you, and your whole sex has claimed reverence at my hands—protection when I could give it. And now, so strangely, so unexpectedly, to know that I may claim your heart! I had hardly dared to hope such blessedness.”

"If indeed you value the gift," said Katharine, "surely I need not tell you that it is one which has long been yours, and higher lips than ours, alas! have pronounced it your just reward for long-tried loyalty and devotion. I may have mistaken you, Albert, but I have never trifled with you. Witness the watchings, the prayers, the eager search for tidings, the bitter disappointments, the anguish of passive endurance, the sickness of heart from hope deferred, which woman only knows. And I—have not I fondly read in my ring—in its form, the eternity—in its brilliancy, the intensity and pureness of—of what I believed!"

"But the ring! It is not on your finger?" demanded Lyndesay.

"I parted with it last night. Nay, surely that cloud upon your brow is not of mistrust! Albert, when will you confide as I do? Is it possible that after all we have endured, we can ever again doubt each other!"

She raised her face towards him as she spoke, and her lover, unable at the moment to find any better answer to her query, pressed upon her ingenuous lips the first fond kiss of avowed affection.

The action was unexpected, and the Lady Katharine, blushing deeply, commenced rapidly turning over the leaves of a volume which lay upon the table near her. But whether the book was a copy of the *Basilicon Doron*, or an edition of Surrey's *Sonnets to the fair Geraldine*, we never could ascertain; and, strange to say, the Lady Katharine herself was never afterwards able to give any satisfactory information on the subject.

Fearful that he might have offended her, and reflecting on her apparently unprotected situation, Lyndesay immediately resumed a manner of the most respectful tenderness.

"Forgive me, dear one," he said; "and now tell me—are you here alone—did you come without a protector?"

"Without an avowed protector," returned Katharine; "but think you that the noble owner of this house would be far distant in his sovereign's hour of extremity? The Lord Craven accompanied me to his own dwelling as my serving-man, and here has he been engaged in devising schemes for the rescue of our dear master. He left the house this morning, hoping,

even at the eleventh hour, to make a diversion in his favour. Alas! how fruitlessly!"

"It was from one of his emissaries, then," returned Lyndesay, "that I was secretly warned to hold myself in readiness to second any endeavour. But nothing was attempted. Indeed it would have been indeed vain to oppose a handful of men to an army. What then, my Katharine, are your plans for escape from this blood-stained land?"

"I have none," she said, "but await the directions of others, and trust that God will provide me a means of surety. And *you*," she said, anxiously watching his countenance, "you will not longer stay here, dear Albert: will you?"

The agitation which was visible upon Lyndesay's features justified Katharine's anxiety. For some minutes evident emotion kept him silent, and when he spoke, it shook his usually firm voice.

"Katharine, my best beloved, give me *now* the right—at *once* give me a husband's right to protect you."

She was silent for a few moments, surprised at his sudden proposal. He placed his arm tenderly round her, and, unable to master his agi-

tation, continued. "Speak the word—say you will be mine today—this hour!"

"It must not be," replied the Lady Katharine, decisively, though her voice trembled as she spoke. "I have yet other duties to fulfil, of which I must first acquit myself. You know, my Albert, I am still in the service of our unhappy Queen, who has a right to expect my instant return from the commission with which she entrusted me. And yet more: from him whom we deplore I received yesternight commands still more sacred, which must be executed ere I contract this engagement."

Lyndesay bit his lip. "You refuse, then!" he said, in a tone of disappointment. "You think, perhaps, I have not a name to bestow for which it were fitting that the daughter of the Earl of Strafford should exchange her own!"

"Nay, this is too foolish! and were it not today, alas! I could smile at you. Have I not plighted you my solemn troth? Have I not said all that woman can say to assure you of my affection? Aye, more than once I should have deemed it possible to utter! Am I not bound to become yours as soon as—to use the words of one

who spoke so well—‘love and duty shall find circumstances propitious.’ And must I again assure you, that that fond tie will be my pride and joy? If I now delay it, must I tell you that it is for your sake rather than my own that I do so; in order that your spirit may no longer chafe against an unjust destiny, and that thoughts, such as just now passed your lips, may not mar our hours of happiness.”

“I believe you, my Katharine,” returned Lyndesay, as he once more fondly drew her towards him. “You are all that is good, and faithful, and true. Forgive my waywardness, if it sometimes renders me impatient that, owing to the impossibility of proving my claims to a name to which I more than half suspect I am entitled, I must offer to your alliance one as inferior to you in birth as he is immeasurably in all else.”

“But if it be now clear that you offer to my alliance one as much my superior in birth as he is immeasurably in all else? But no—that were impossible!”

“Such a case, alas! I dare not hope; neither must you delude yourself with such flattering anticipations, my affianced one. I know that the

renegade Dominican gave his testimony to that effect before his last rash crime; and, yet more, I have in my possession papers which fell into my hands by accident, of which the perusal has strangely affected me with the impression that they hold the key to my fate. Yet I have no evidence, and, in fact, but little plausible pretension, to support rights founded but on the word of a murderer, and the presumed testimony of anonymous papers."

"You have the word of a King—my Albert—the written testimony of one who is now an angel in heaven. But I will not keep you in suspense. Listen to me, then, for I have a long tale to tell."

The Lady Katharine commenced the recital of her last evening's adventures, relating every circumstance of her interview with the King. As she disclosed to her lover the revelations which the Monarch had made to her on the subject of his own destiny, she placed the packet with which she had been charged in his hands.

Albert regarded the address, which was for "The King of England, France, and Ireland"—and long after the conclusion of Katharine's story he mused in silence.

CHAPTER VII.

The bay trees in our country are all withered,
And meteors fright the fixed stars of heaven :
The pale-faced moon looks bloody on the earth,
And lean-look'd prophets whisper fearful change :
Rich men look sad, and ruffians dance and leap.

KING RICHARD II.

“How idle are our best founded anticipations ! a mere sport for the ways of Providence !” said the Lady Katharine to her lover, when, after hours which had passed like minutes in the interchange of all those explanations, so fondly dwelt on by those who love, the entrance of Pierre at length aroused them to a recollection of their present situation.

“I had hardly thought to survive this day, yet this very day has proved the one for which my heart has yearned.—Oh ! how long !—as its sum of earthly bliss.”

"You have expressed my very thoughts, dear Katharine," returned Lyndesay; "and these mysterious decrees of Providence should teach us to temper our wishes, as also to moderate our despair; since we know not under what aspect the desired blessing may come, nor how fearfully accompanied; while the dreaded evil may so far lose its sting from circumstances, or we ourselves may meet with such unlooked for support, that our portion of suffering may be but a fraction of what we anticipate. Thus we are saved opposite temptations too great for our nature; for the perfect happiness your imagination and mine have pictured would make a heaven here."

"Indeed, dearest, I tremble lest we already have too much—too much to last."

"In any case, let us take a lesson from the past," replied our hero, "and whatever may chance to us, let us not fail, my Katharine, to hope and to trust."

Katharine replied by a gentle pressure of the hand which held hers, and both were silent for a few moments. At length a thought seemed to strike her.

"You were speaking about half an hour ago of

our venerated friend, Howard; and though I was unable to satisfy your inquiries concerning him, yet Pierre, who has never quitted the kingdom, probably can inform us."

"The more so, since when last I parted from him, the poor youth was in his service," returned Albert.

"Strange that this should not have occurred to me, but to-day all other circumstances had vanished from my mind, and the sight of Pierre brought but the recollection of his mistress."

Beckoning the dwarf, whose gesticulations betokened a degree of impatience to be noticed by no means common to him, Lyndesay made him comprehend their desire to know Howard's place of abode and present condition.

Pierre, who had never quitted the service of the venerable old man, and whose fidelity to his persecuted master had found him constant and often dangerous employment, soon communicated to them, in his mute language, that the aged clergyman, wearied with efforts to elude the malice of his enemies, and now hopeless as to the final result of the struggle, had proceeded to London within the last few days, and taken refuge with a

relative residing in the Grey Friars; with the intention of surrendering himself to the authorities, and, as a consequence, to imprisonment. During the short interval since their arrival, the rapid succession of events had called forth all the ingenuity and zeal of which Pierre was master; and he had by turns served as messenger amongst the unfortunate cavaliers, and acted as spy upon their enemies. In the former character he had been sent to the house of Lady Wheeler on the preceding evening, when that lady, anxious to secure so valuable an auxiliary to her proposed enterprise, had detained him, a task not difficult after she had revealed to him who was the fair contriver of the attempt.

The Lady Katharine, on her part, scarcely less astonished at the rencontre, which seemed so auspicious, had as yet been too entirely engrossed by the main subject of all men's thoughts, to put any questions to her former follower.

All this, however, had necessarily separated the page much from his master, and when on this morning, after having guided the steps of Albert Lyndesay towards the house which contained his mistress, the dwarf returned to the Grey Friars,

he found that nature had given way under the shock of that day's catastrophe, and the reverend minister had been seized with a fit of epilepsy, which had bidden fair to cut short what remained of a harassed existence. He had, however, with difficulty been recovered, and the names which had first passed his lips were those of the two individuals whom Pierre now addressed; whom the page had therefore sought the instant he could leave his master.

"I will go to him instantly," exclaimed Lyndesay, "and will bring you tidings of our friend, Kate, ere you rest."

"Wait but a second, and I accompany you," returned the maiden, preparing with alacrity to adopt the same disguise which she had worn on the preceding evening, at the same time handing a long grey cloak to her lover. "Wrap yourself in this, and we shall pass for an honest citizen and his wife on their way to test the flavour of their neighbour's venison and canary."

"But why thus needlessly expose yourself to danger?" said he. "Surely this is not a day on which such as you should venture abroad without sufficient cause."

“*With* you, *for* you, Albert!” she exclaimed. Then, checking herself, she added, more gravely, “But the danger is not so great as you think,—at least to *me*. It is for you that I fear; and I go, not only to attend our friend, but,—do not smile,—I go to protect you. Nay,—I read your look of surprise; but surely suspicion is much less likely to attach itself to your movements if in the company of a woman!”

“It may be so,” replied her lover, “but again I protest against your running the hazard. If for my sake—pardon me, Katharine—I forbid it.”

The young lady whispered a word or two into his ear which brought a faint smile upon his countenance, and a blush upon her own, but which either satisfied or silenced him, for he made no further opposition.

Soon their preparations were completed, and with hood and beaver so arranged as to conceal as much as possible their features, the two sallied forth into the Strand, with intention of passing to the Grey Friars. This quarter of the city lay a little to the north of old St. Paul’s, the ancient church having been suppressed at the dissolution of monasteries, but afterwards endowed anew;

and the convent having been converted into a hospital for fatherless children, by the name of Christ's Church and Hospital.

The afternoon was clear and frosty, and a few departing rays of the winter sun lingered here and there upon a steeple or a tower, as if to cheat the cold and ice-bound world into an air of cheeriness and warmth. And like that cold gleam was the smile which men forced their faces to wear for the instant, as they met, and greeted each other, and passed on. There were but few persons abroad, and of these each seemed so intent on the business on which he was bound as to leave no time to loiter; and a hasty and mis-doubting glance at every wayfarer was all the salutation which on that day passed along the panic-stricken city. Or if here and there two or three were grouped together, engaged in earnest and half-suppressed converse; on the approach of another party they hastily dispersed, uttering aloud some common-place appointment for quoits or tennis, with hope to delude the passer-by into the conviction that the subject on their lips was the farthest possible from the fearful topic which lay heavy at all hearts.

Nature alone remained unconscious. The small birds, rendered tame by the severity of the weather, chirped and fluttered round the huge cars filled with grain, which were slowly conveying the country produce to the capacious magazines of the city. The habitual whistle of the rustic drivers, and the clang from the hoofs of the powerful teams, the one as ignorant as the other of aught save the daily labour of the sod, although accustomed sounds in those quarters, seemed strange on this day, when men, struck dumb with horror, yet knowing not what to fear, had marvelled less to have seen the sword of the destroying Angel extended aloft across their city.

The pair continued their walk, and soon passed the barrier dividing the Strand from Fleet Street, called Temple Bar, but at the time consisting but of posts and rails, with connecting chains. The shops, or open stalls, which then served as such, were for the most part closed; though here and there a stout Parliamentary and his apprentices were clamorously holding out their wares for sale, and endeavouring, by a more than ordinary parade of tempting commodities, and a jargon of their "most sweet voices," increased exactly in

proportion to the stillness around, to demonstrate how utterly insensible they were to any cause, on that day in particular, for a departure from ordinary routine.

“ So, sir, a pair of slippers for your dame. Madam, a ruff, a modest and seemly ruff, such as will become a godly matron like yourself. Nay, an that please you not, we have Ireton knots——”

“ A goodly rapier, young master; such a one it was, sold by ourselves, that ran through the body of the incendiary Montrose at Philiphaugh. Ah! now you turn, master. He was left for dead, you know. The Lord have mercy on his soul! Ah! try it: the only one remaining—the duplicate of that famous——”

“ What will ye buy, gentlemen? Books—prints—heads of the Cavaliers—catalogue of the malignants—crumbs of the bread of Eden—devout wrestlings—the history of Babylon and her daughters—a pure white robe for the Millennium—What will ye buy, madam? Sighs and groans, or the odour of penitence—Pictures, young master—the chiefs of the royalists—all likenesses—the Marquis of Ormonde—see, sir,

Hertford—Montrose—you'd be able to know them immediately—And here, as I live, is one so like yourself—it would be valuable to your dame—Nay, it must be your own portrait! Regard it, madam—look here, Nicholas——”

As the vender of books turned to his apprentice to call his attention to the remarkable resemblance which one of his roughly-limned prints bore to Lyndesay, the latter, with his fair charge, passed the bulwark of cars and drays, which, blocking up the narrow street, had compelled them to remain longer than was expedient opposite to the print shop. For some time they passed on unmolested by similar encounters. At length came the cry from behind of “A Cavalier! a Cavalier! London 'prentice boys—for the Parliament!”—and a respectably dressed man, who was standing at the door of his closed booth, laying his hand on Lyndesay's shoulder, advised him to take refuge speedily in the Church of St. Paul's, till the tumult should have subsided. His wife, who stood beside him, interposed.

“Why not here, Gilbert? Why not in our house?”

“I tell thee, dame, I dare not,” returned her

partner. "Knowest thou not the forfeit for harbouring malignants? I were a ruined man."

"Poor young things!—more's the shame then," sighed the matron,—“so innocent as they look and *are*, whoever hears me say it. For what's this fine but tyranny! and those that lay it on talk of the tyranny of him that's gone, than whom a better, and wiser, and kinder gentleman never lived. Alack! we shall never see his like again!”

And the citizen's wife drew her apron across her eyes for the twentieth time that day; whilst her husband, to conceal his discontent and hers, and to avoid the increasing rabble, closed his door, and took refuge in the little inner apartment of the shop.

Few apprentices, however, joined the hue and cry; for the hearts of most were with the loyal and unfortunate gentlemen who were the objects of it. Indeed, there was some sign of a counter movement from this party; but prudence, and the urgent remonstrances of their masters, prevailed to prevent it. The diversion, however, was so far favourable, that it afforded time to our hero and his fair companion to reach the Church of St.

Paul's in safety. Entering the lofty portico, they found themselves in the nave of the splendid antique minster, before the fire a cathedral of much greater extent than when rebuilt according to the plan of Sir Christopher Wren.

In various parts of the now desecrated fane, persons were assembled in conversation or gossip, or were met together for purposes of edification. In pursuance of the latter object in particular, a crowd of hearers were listening with breathless attention to the outpourings of the spirit from a "brother," who occupied one of the wooden pulpits or desks common in Catholic churches. With this group our lovers mingled, anxious to escape observation, and thus were compelled to listen to a tirade, in which the orator, having eloquently set forth the act of that day as a "crowning mercy," represented to his hearers the necessity of utterly extirpating the house of Ahab.

Disgust would have so far prevailed over our hero's sense of prudence, as to prompt him to turn indignantly away; but at that moment the arm of Katharine pressed his, and turning he beheld a party of five or six troopers who entered

the Church; and, aware that even the sacred precincts would afford him no sanctuary were he discovered, he checked the impulse, and the pair remained immovable. They were not, however, long suffered to rest unobserved. A slight stir took place in the crowd, and a female, hooded, edged herself close to Albert's side. Soon her low voice breathed, rather than spoke, in his ear,—

“You are marked.—That savage 'prentice cry hath brought the soldiers.—I know the passage from the church to the crypt.—Come quickly.”

Our hero had no need to look at the speaker, for he knew at once the voice and accent of Ninon. In truth, she herself had been compelled to take refuge during that day in the Church of St. Faith, which formed the crypt of old St. Paul's, where she lay concealed from the fury of the populace, though of the opposite party to that which now threatened danger to Albert Lyndesay.

It was known that a woman, pretending to the gifts possessed by Ninon, had travelled from Berkshire, in order to assure the regicides that “their measures were consecrated from above, and ratified by a heavenly sanction;”^{*} and the outraged

^{*} See Hume, vol. vii.

people, who had seen Ninon in the ranks of the Puritan party, believing her to be the offender, had threatened to execute on her the punishment of a witch. and were proceeding to do so, when her usual acuteness found the means of eluding their pursuit.

She was not, however, to be so fortunate a second time. Scarcely had the pair she sought to rescue separated themselves from the concourse which surrounded the preacher, when the Parliamentary soldiers, directed by the zealous bookseller, who had now joined their company, advanced towards them. Lyndesay saw the movement, and placing Katharine's arm within that of Ninon, he said hastily, but firmly,—

“Protect *her* if you love me.—Hasten to conduct her to a place of safety, and leave the rest to heaven.”

He abruptly turned away before either of them could reply, and the next moment he had surrendered himself to the officer in command of the small force sent for his apprehension.

Little parley had been necessary, as Lyndesay scorned evasion of the questions put to him; and, his identity being established by his own admis-

sion, he was led away a prisoner, closely guarded, towards Bishopsgate, where he was lodged in the stately mansion called Crosbie Place, then a noted prison for Royalists, being in the occupation of Sir Stephen Langham, by whom it had been leased under the Earl of Northampton, who fell so gallantly at Hopton Heath.

But, beautiful as was the structure, it was a prison-house still; and Lyndesay, as he reflected over the vicissitudes of that day, could not help considering it one of the strange inconsistencies of his fate, that he should be immured a state prisoner for his loyalty, in the magnificent mansion of one who had died the earliest, and of the most devoted, of the victims to the royal cause.

But he suffered not himself to be overpowered by the calamity which had overtaken him. The thoughts which naturally came crowding to his mind, far from dispiriting him, seemed but to inspire him with faith more firm and unflinching. One subject alone damped his energy, and caused an impatience of his captivity which personal considerations could never have awakened. It was solicitude for the fate of Katharine.

The hope that by his separating from her she might escape unobserved, had induced him, in the first instance, to make no attempt at eluding the pursuit of the soldiers, and this stratagem, he trusted, had proved successful. But he had no means of ascertaining her situation, for all communication with those without was rigidly cut off from him; and the friends of the Royalist prisoners, whenever they were bold enough to appear, were denied access.

Weeks passed by,—weeks of suspense and weariness, which might have quenched a less vigorous spirit. But, conscious of rectitude, and wholly ignorant until his trial of the desperate proceedings which the dominant faction were at the time carrying on out of doors, against the chiefs of the Cavalier party, Lyndesay looked forward to the hour of his trial as that of his probable deliverance; or, at worst, as the commencement of a compulsory exile, in the stead of the voluntary one to which he had long ago sentenced himself, if his native land should cease to possess a government to which his conscience would permit his allegiance.

CHAPTER VIII.

Never give up ! there are chances and changes
Helping the hopeful a hundred to one,
And through the chaos High Wisdom arranges,
Ever success—if you'll only hope on :
Never give up ! for the wisest is boldest,
Knowing that Providence mingles the cup ;
And of all maxims, the best, as the oldest,
Is the true watchword of—Never give up !

ELIZA COOK.

BUT during the dreary interval of Lyndesay's captivity, his friends had not been idle on his behalf. On the unhappy day of his arrest, the Lady Katharine, when she had in some measure recovered the first shock, had proceeded, attended by Ninon, to pay her intended visit to Howard. The sight of her seemed to revive the old man, and to recall his scattered faculties ; and presently she revealed to him the extent of her misfortune, though hopeless of aid from one who was him-

self amongst the proscribed. She received, however, that consolation from him which the true Christian alone knows how to impart; and if, when she left him, there appeared no further hope with regard to Albert's release than before, yet her own spirit was refreshed and cheered by the soothing influence of her old friend's counsel and converse, so that she was prepared to "hope all things."

But depending entirely, as she did, for success, upon the beneficent interposition of a merciful Providence, Katharine had not forgotten the old proverb, "*Aide toi et Dieu t'aidera*;" and from this hour her mind was busy in devising all projects, possible and impossible, for affording aid to Lyndesay in this emergency.

With this ruling party she knew that her own direct intercession would be of no avail; neither had she friend or acquaintance whose influence might promote the adoption of lenient measures towards her lover. At times, however, the recollection of her former interview with Oliver Cromwell, in which his conduct, if not that of a high and honourable man, had yet been free from injustice or inhumanity, occurred to her as afford-

ing material for hope ; since the fact that Lyndesay had on that occasion been the means of saving his life, established—as it appeared to our heroine—something like a claim upon his good offices.

Repugnant as she felt to soliciting aid or favour from one whom she had seen as the right hand of the confederacy against her sovereign, Katharine at length resolved to apply in person to the man whose will was assuming the form of law ; and to entreat his all-powerful interference in behalf of Lyndesay. “None are all evil ;” and even in the arch regicide sparks of feeling had appeared, which to Katharine’s mind rendered such a proceeding not altogether hopeless. It was, in short, her only chance, and she tried it.

Accompanied by Howard, who had partly recovered, and whose helplessness had been his best shield against persecution, our heroine, a few days subsequent to the events related in our last chapter, presented herself at the apartments in the Palace of Whitehall, now occupied by the ambitious aspirant to dominion, who had replaced the rightful owners of that regal pile ; and, with tremulous earnestness, she transmitted a written request to Oliver Cromwell that he would grant her a few minutes’ audience. Her name she

added, with the date and circumstances of their previous interview. But soon an answer was returned. The General had no cognizance of the name or party,—was engaged in meditation, and could not receive applications.

Like the lion that has licked blood, Cromwell had taken his first taste of cruelty and inhumanity, and the Lady Katharine found reason to believe that the first great crime had steeled his heart, and made of him a ruthless man. Stung to the heart, she turned from the threshold. The noble daughter of the Earl of Strafford turned away from the Palace over whose counsels her father had so long held sway,—a rejected suppliant, a discarded petitioner. And that by no crowned or diademed head,—no insolence of office, but by the simple individual will of a low-born adventurer.

But so it was. And the maiden, who, by this stroke, beheld all her hopes destroyed of Cromwell's favourable interposition, was ready to give up all for lost. Then the still small voice of memory brought back Lyndesay's words,—“Whatever may chance to us, let us not fail, my Katharine, to hope and to trust,” and with an effort at self-command, she turned to Howard.

“ Dear sir, counsel me ; for this cruel failure has swamped the frail bark which held all my hopes.”

“ Frail indeed, my child, did it hold *all*. But your highest hopes, I trust, are anchored where the storms of human passions cannot reach them. Nevertheless, your duty is to use all righteous means that God has placed in your power.”

“ I know of no other means,” replied Katharine, —“ my little stock of expedients has vanished with this miserable disappointment. Truth and justice, you see, dear sir, may not even obtain a hearing.”

“ It is evident,” returned her companion, “ that a fair and open application to the leaders of this misguided faction will avail nothing ; yet be not discouraged. ‘ The race ’ is not ever ‘ to the swift, neither the battle to the strong.’ Failing this, the direct mode of obtaining a hearing, we must seek another channel. Hast thou, my child, any remembrance of one whom thou knewest in thy childhood, the bailiff Shimei Haman ? ”

“ Surely ; I remember him well,” returned the maiden, “ having been the inmate of his dwelling for a night whilst in the custody of the

fearful Dominican, and having been compelled to form one of his auditory while he was uttering a profane declamation against my dear mistress. But what of him, dear sir? This man has been—has he not—your deadliest enemy? It were vain to hope for aid from him on the score of former relations.”

“Neither do I,” returned the clergyman; “though Haman, if he were willing, might well turn the scale in our favour: for, having gone the lengths of fanaticism, he has acquired a sway over the consciences of some of these men, and the semblance of such deference from all; and full of wealth and honour, his house is the resort of the heads of the ruling party in this great city. But I know the man. Selfish and hard-hearted, nought but considerations of interest could affect him; and I have myself too deeply experienced his perfidy to trust him again. May God forgive him as freely as I do! We will speak no more of him. It was to recall to thy recollection his daughter that I mentioned his name but now.”

“Lilias!—I know her well. She it was who told me on that night that Albert Lyndesay lived. Not another word was exchanged between us;

yet that brief communication told me that she knew my secret, and that I had her sympathy."

"Doubtless you had; for poor Lillas, whatever be her failings, has tenaciously retained her singleness of heart and fidelity to early affections, and her hard post has made duty and feeling almost universally at variance."

"She has not, then, been dazzled by the power and riches which her father's ambition has heaped upon her?" inquired Katharine.

"As far as I may judge by report—no," replied Howard. "For though an outward conformity with those among whom she lived may have cost her no compunction, yet would I believe her worldly condition has neither afforded her any gratification, unless in cases where she had the means of following the dictates of her own kind nature. Guided by this last, rather than by any fixed principle, an early attachment in her own sphere has been the strong influence through which she has resisted threats alike and flattery from her father, and has ever maintained a sort of independence amongst her party. In applying to her, we shall be safe, at least, if not successful."

"Think you, then, she possesses the power to interpose in our behalf?"

"Like ourselves, she would probably gain nothing by open intercession," responded Howard. "But Liliás has long resided amongst these people, and has a ready wit; and her ingenuity may possibly devise some plan, which may, at least, gain our petition a hearing."

"A thousand thanks for the suggestion," exclaimed Katharine, with returning animation. "I will lose no time in acting upon it. But you, my kind friend, must not risk your grey hairs at Haman's threshold: already you have suffered too much through his malice. Nay, do not reply. I have a resource. Ninon, who possesses the confidence of these fanatics, will afford me both guidance and protection; and I have but to signify my desire to Pierre, to procure her attendance. I *know* her faithful and true, for I heard it from the highest lips."

"I myself do not need to be assured of her fidelity," returned the clergyman, regarding his charge with a smile; "else had Albert Lyndesay scarce lived to tell thee, fond dreamer! of her worth and service."

Katharine's cheek gathered colour as she spoke. "You are under a mistake, dear sir, but I will explain all hereafter. My informant was the King."

"The King! Then indeed I would trust thee with this woman to the ends of the world. But strange and inscrutable are the ways of Providence! A raving impostor! apparently in league with the erring multitude!—yet is her path at every turn interwoven with that of this young Cavalier, and her truth guaranteed by the sainted Monarch! But if all were obvious to our sense, where were the room for the exercise of our faith? Let us therefore wait with patience, and all will be revealed."

To Howard's simple and believing mind this was not difficult. Yet even his humble spirit was wounded, and tears moistened his eyes, as he beheld Katharine, his high-born and fondly-cherished pupil, depart under the protection of an itinerant beggar-woman, to supplicate the boon of a few words of audience from the humble playmate of her infancy—the child of her father's land-steward.

The house in which the Rev. Shimei Haman

now resided during his visits to the metropolis, which, owing to the good cheer there prevailing, were neither few nor far between, was one of those "divers faire-builte houses," described by Stow as adorning the sides of Oldborne (Holborn) Hill, from the Church of St. Andrew's upwards. It was probably with a view to this good benefice that the reverend minister had so located himself; a hint not lost upon his powerful patrons, and which brought speedy promises of the accomplishments of his wishes.

In fact, the glory and honour of the ex-bailiff was now at its zenith. His extreme rapacity had acquired him immense wealth, which was not likely to be lessened by any act of extravagance or of benevolence of his own; and to his daughter's he took care to place a limit after the most secure manner, by withholding from her the means.

Yet did not his avarice extend to the length of self-denial, a quality of which, to do them justice, the really strict and rigid fanatics had some right to boast. A Puritan only in name, the zealous minister was never known to let his holy enthusiasm trench upon the hours allotted

to selfish indulgence ; and his idea of the enjoyment of wealth, next to the bare possession of it, lay in the gratification of an Epicurean appetite.

Of his daughter he was still both proud and fond ; for the very vulture cherishes its young ; yet into this, his one pure feeling, had entered the festering gangrene of worldliness. Disappointed in the hope that her beauty and quick parts might become the tools of his advancement, through Liliás' unswerving constancy to her first love, and the contempt with which at times she treated his professions of sanctity, there had insensibly mingled in his feelings and deportment towards her, a pride and bitterness, which, as he himself grew in power and worldly honour (and in proportion his fear of her decreased) evinced itself from time to time by acts of harsh and arbitrary tyranny, such as the spirit of Liliás was but ill calculated to sustain. Of this number, as the reader may guess, was an imperious prohibition of all intercourse between the maiden and her affianced Walter.

In truth, had Liliás been capable of fear, she might almost have been said, in her turn, to fear

her father; but the oppression which might have subdued a gentler spirit, produced in hers but the resolution to dissimulate and to temporize. Possessed of an inflexibility of purpose, and an obstinacy of will—which is often mistaken for firmness and mature judgment, but which unquestionably adds power to character—Lilias, when playing to perfection the part required of her in the Puritan farce of the day, was more dangerous to her associates than when, in a tone of undisguised scorn, she had loaded it with irony and contempt.

Such were the parties, to whose residence, on the evening of the day which closed the career of the Duke of Hamilton, Lord Holland, and the heroic Lord Capel, our heroine and her sibyl guide proceeded. They obtained admission without difficulty, as the person of Ninon was known to the domestics; and, on inquiring for Lilias, they were, without demur, shown into a saloon where she was.

But instantly Ninon perceived the error she had committed. Presuming upon her known relations with the party, the serving-man had confidently introduced them, not, as they had anticipated, to the presence of Lilias alone, but to

that of a numerous circle of the fanatical leaders, assembled around the preacher in the act of "seeking the Lord."

The room was richly furnished, couches and cushions of crimson cloth being placed around for the accommodation of the distinguished guests, who, with some relaxation of the starched primness which had originally distinguished their order, were lolling thereupon in no uneasy, though far from becoming, attitudes. Near to the fireplace stood a well-stuffed and most luxurious-looking chair, covered with crimson velvet, and a desk of corresponding material was placed before it; and here reposed, in self-complacent triumph, the stiff and angular body which "did contain a spirit," before whose oracular and monstrous effusions the fanatic alike and the dissembler found it expedient, for the time, to bow.

A kind of hymn, or song of praise, burst from his lips, and in the frantic language of this thanksgiving for the deliverance of the nation from her foes (which might be considered a wild and vulgar parody on the song of Deborah and Barak) all present were called upon to join.

Into this circle were Ninon and the Lady

Katharine introduced; and towards them, in an instant, all eyes were directed. Immediately two individuals started from their seats. In one of these the Lady Katharine recognised the person of General Cromwell, her former protector in the Tower. The other was Lilius Haman.

“Woman, wherefore this intrusion! Seest thou not that the elders of the congregation and the Lord’s anointed are met together to celebrate the deliverance of Israel from the race of the giants, of whom three have fallen this day? Wherefore come here to show thy rage and beggary! Surely we have borne with them long enough. Begone, I say; for see, thy foot-marks stain my splendid rug of Brussels fabric—twelve pounds eighteen the cost, as I live. So—hast brought another beggar too? I’d know who ’tis that dares come uninvited under my roof. Wherefore, woman, or whatever thou mayest be, pull off that veil of thine.”

The times were past when the coalition and countenance of Nimor had been necessary to the minister’s advancement; and of late her visits in his domicile had been restricted to the apartment of his daughter or the domestics. Smarting, as

he was, under the resentment caused by the cutting short of a most edifying burst of zeal, which had been seasoned by some allusions intended for Cromwell's particular ear, and his own especial interest, it is not to be wondered at that the *ci-devant* bailiff resorted to a summary method of kicking down the ladder by which he had mounted.

The southern blood of Ninon was, however, roused; and, with a momentary forgetfulness of the circumstances of danger, in which herself and her charge were placed, she retorted, a bitter scorn flashing from her eyes as from her lips,—

“Shimei Haman, I never ate of thy bread, nor drank of thy cup; for thy words were poison enough, and I would have starved, rather than have tasted thy salt. Son of my Lord Strafford's cowherd, know that——”

But she was interrupted. A firm hand grasped her wrist, and a voice whispered in her ear, “Ninon, are you mad?” Turning, she saw Lilius Haman, who had fixed her eyes on Katharine from the moment of their entrance, and slowly advanced towards them. She had on this occasion adopted the Puritan costume to a

nicety, and her face wore the same solemn length, which was common to each individual of the assembly. Gravely shaking her head at the two, she turned towards her father.

“Much do I bewail, sir, this untoward interruption of our thanksgivings. The good mother hath erred; yea, grievously. Nevertheless the damsel, for such she is, is known to me. Her name is Dorcas Worthywimple, and a very Dorcas she hath been in deeds; but, alack! she hath not the gift of speech nor of hearing, though well stored with all other of this world’s gifts. It is not seemly, therefore, that she remain in this godly company, where it would be but as the casting of pearls before swine;—and I will lead her away.”

During this speech, a twinkle might be observed in the eye of Oliver Cromwell, and he approached the spot where the females stood in a group. It was increased when the minister exclaimed with vehemence,—

“Nay, if she be rich, may be she hath to spare for the need of the Lord’s people—for the present distress, I say. Ask her, Lilly, or sign if thou wilt, but in any case make her understand that the

poorer brethren lack that which she possesseth. Dost thou hear me, maiden? Let her not depart, I tell thee, without"—

But before the reverend speaker could achieve the climax of his oration, his mouth was stopped, and his senses utterly bewildered, by the descent upon his cranium of one of the capacious and well-stuffed pillows with which the sofas or divans, placed round the room, were furnished. The missile proceeded from the strong arm of General Cromwell, causing, at first, a lively consternation, which soon, however, subsided under the tranquillizing expression of the General's countenance, and gave place to a still more general and uncontrollable inclination to laugh.

Perceiving that Katharine and her attendant were taking advantage of the confusion to make their escape, after exchanging significant signs with Liliás; Cromwell, in no way affected by the excitement he had caused, stepped aside, and whispered to Katharine as she passed out,—

"Venture no more on such hazards, maiden, and thank the brains that a lump of wool could stun, for your escape now. And you, Mistress Liliás," added he, turning towards the minister's

daughter, "pray what might be the tenor of your communications with the young lady? All five fingers of the one hand, as it seemed to me, were held up, with two of the other, and I think I heard the word 'tomorrow.'"

It was true that Lilius had endeavoured thus to indicate to the Lady Katharine her desire to meet her on the following evening at the hour of seven, when her father, as she knew, would be engaged with his nightly potations, which nothing was allowed to disturb, and Katharine might enter in safety. The damsel saw that Cromwell had penetrated her secret. Willing, however, to carry on the farce, she answered him.

"My father bade me make the poor deaf maiden understand he needed her charity, and I did so by sign, according to her mode of speech."

"Which accounts for thy whispering in her ear, doubtless," returned the General. Then turning away, he added, muttering, "We must keep an eye on this quick-witted damsel."

Meantime poor Katharine, glad to escape on any terms from so menacing an assemblage, sorrowfully returned to Craven House. The few words addressed to her by General Cromwell

had convinced her of his perfect cognizance of her identity, together with his fixed resolution not to interfere in her behalf.

It was true, he had facilitated her escape by means of a piece of low buffoonery; but a word of command from him would have accomplished the same object, and his parting admonition sufficiently spoke the hopelessness of the claim she fancied herself to possess on his good offices. Her impressions were confirmed the next day, when, in accordance with the appointment of Lilius, she repaired, at the hour of seven, to the house on Oldborne Hill, and was informed that "Mistress Lilius had been sent for in the morning by General Cromwell, to pass some days in company with his daughters, and Master Haman had compelled her to go, to her great discontent."

Here, then, was an end of all hope from that quarter. To the house of the inexorable General, no less than to his apartments at Whitehall, all access was out of the question; and Katharine, on weighing the circumstance, came to the conclusion that Cromwell had become aware of

their proposed interview, and had thus purposely thwarted it.

Nothing, then, remained to be done; and she must await the day of trial, in the patient hope that the Power which mocks at human means, might so interpose as to render them superfluous.

It was nearly within a week of the dreaded period, when one night Pierre, who had rarely ventured to show himself, from a fear of hazarding a discovery of his mistress, was accosted on his way from the Grey Friars, by a man who had taken his station for some days near St. Paul's, and who, after thrusting a billet into the dwarf's hand, immediately decamped. It was addressed "To the Lady——," and Pierre at once carried it to his mistress. It contained these words—

"All is not lost,—do not despair. Bid Ninon wait, on Tuesday se'nnight, in the cloisters of Westminster Abbey."

"Alas!" said Katharine, as she folded up the billet, with the writing of which she was entirely unacquainted, "ere that time his fate will be decided."

CHAPTER IX.

Bold is his aspect, but his eye
Is pregnant with anxiety,
While, like a tutelary Power,
He there stands fixed, from hour to hour.

WORDSWORTH.

BUT the day of the trial approached,—if trial that could be termed which was a mere recapitulation of charges against the accused; to meet which, as he had not been forewarned of their import, he had no opportunity of preparing a defence; and where, as in all cases in which the regicides presided, the judges were by interest the enemies of the party judged. Day by day numbers of unfortunate men underwent the process of what was called a trial before the self-constituted Court in which Bradshaw, for the present, presided, and which assumed to itself a rank equivalent to that of a Board of Privy Council.

Since the death of the King several of the peers of the realm had been condemned to suffer capital punishment for following the dictates of duty and conscience; and some executions had taken place; but the majority, through family or party interest, had the intercession of powerful friends, or from not having been conspicuous in the struggle, escaped with imprisonment, banishment, or loss of property.

In the case of our hero, however, no such flattering hopes could be entertained. The near ally of Montrose, and in consequence a most irreconcilable enemy to the existing government; a proscribed man, and included in the number of those on whose heads a price had been set by the ruling powers, mercy was not to be hoped for. Destitute also of relatives and friends, there appeared to be none who would care to risk anything in his behalf at this desperate crisis.

Yet, though there was no probability of aid from without, Lyndesay, as we have said, did not despair. He had seen death in its most terrible forms until the abstract idea of it had ceased to cause a shudder; and in the present case the knowledge that he was suffering in a righteous

cause, gave him a degree of sanguine trust in the overruling interposition of Providence on his behalf, which would have appeared ill-grounded and enthusiastic to those who have never experienced, that in the hour of extremity the faith of the Christian often receives that more than human strength he has in vain waited and struggled for during years of comparative hopefulness and confidence.

Ignorant too, as we have said, of the severity of the measures which the government were adopting, he amused himself at times by reflecting upon the late rapidly-succeeding transitions in his fate, and fondly, perhaps, persuaded himself that the sudden vision of happiness he had enjoyed could not have flashed on him for a moment, to be quenched for ever. On this subject, however, he could not school his heart into complete submission, and anxiety of the most torturing nature accompanied the reflection. But it was useless to pursue these thoughts on the only subject which would tend to unman him. And it is still more useless for us to follow them. We hasten to the catastrophe.

It was about a month after his arrest that the

Governor of Crosbie Place suddenly informed him that an order had arrived for his appearance on that day before the Court in Westminster Hall, to undergo his trial; and, before he had time to arrange his thoughts to meet this momentous crisis, the officers appeared to conduct him to the Court.

With courtesy and perfect composure he requested them to wait until he had completed his toilet, and received in return some rude and coarse remarks upon the vanity of his personal adornments.

These latter were not, on the present occasion, however, such as to provoke censure on account of their richness or gaiety, as he wore an entire suit of mourning; but the very cut of the doublet, together with the lace collar and ruffles, which formed a contrast to the plain linen worn by the party now in power, and the peculiar care with which the gentlemen Cavaliers dressed and arranged their long and flowing hair—all afforded subject for coarse ribaldry to the sect whose pride lay in an extreme neglect of the most ordinary care of the person, even to the point, if report said true, of a disregard to cleanliness.

Our hero, therefore, though far from being disposed to bestow much consideration upon his outward man on the present occasion, was habited with a scrupulous attention to neatness and good taste, which appeared to his vulgar attendants little less than profaneness. Enduring their remarks without reply or notice, he prepared to accompany them to the Hall.

Calm and self-possessed, he appeared before his judges; and perhaps his really fine person and expressive countenance never showed to greater advantage than when he took his place before that tribunal; his brow shaded by a cast of seriousness, which his present situation increased almost to melancholy, while his sable suit proclaimed him what he was in fact, a mourner.

Besides Bradshaw, the president, who occupied a chair of state raised upon a platform at the upper end of the Hall, there were present—ranged upon benches furnished with scarlet drapery, and placed one above the other—somewhere about forty judges. Among the most distinguished were Cromwell, Grey, Fleetwood, General Fairfax, Ireton, Waller, Ludlowe, Hazlerigge, with many others of lesser note, and

the crowd of spectators without the bar was immense. The prisoner was separated from the bench of judges by the table, where sat the clerks of the Court.

The first object which fixed his eyes was Oliver Cromwell; but of that guarded politician the iron features relaxed not a muscle, as he beheld before him the man who had saved his own life, now at the mercy of the tribunal of which he constituted a member, nor did he show sign or token of recognition.

Lyndesay, on entering, had been commanded to kneel. He hesitated; but two strong hands placed on his shoulders produced at least the semblance of a genuflexion; and immediately the president commanded him to uncover his head.

"I deny the authority of the Court," replied the prisoner, "and no act of mine shall recognise it."

Immediately the officer near him struck off his hat, and one of the clerks of the Court proceeded to read the indictment.

It contained, as might be expected, a list of crimes, including rebellion, murder, and conspiracy,—impiety and idolatry in singular combination,—and, as a climax, the accused stood

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charged with regular and intimate association with that most infamous and wicked incendiary and malignant, James Graham, sometime Marquis of Montrose.

To prove these accusations—or, at least, to give a colour to the proceedings which were to follow them—several witnesses were summoned. Amongst these was the Rev. Shimei Haman, who deposed to the presence of the prisoner at the battle of Newbury. There were present, also, emissaries of the Marquis of Argyle; and all concurred in giving testimony to the strenuous co-operation of Albert Lyndesay with the Marquis of Montrose, throughout the career of strife and warfare which that nobleman had pursued.

“And now, unhappy youth,” said Cromwell, when these frivolous depositions had been hurried to an end, “canst thou show us any cause why the vengeance of the Lord should be stayed?”

“Truly,” rejoined Bradshaw, “the lad is a likely and well-looking youth; and might, by the power of grace, be yet a vessel of glory, would he confess the diabolical arts used by his leader to corrupt the youth of his society, and

entice them into all ungodliness. Say then, Master Lyndesay, dost thou repent thy wicked covenant with James Graham?"

"Do I repent that which is my glory, my only pride?" replied Lyndesay, in a tone of indignation at such a mention of such a name. "No; fervently, most fervently, do I thank the God whose name ye blaspheme to the sanction of murder, of sacrilege, of, alas! the most dire treason,—that God I thank that he has been pleased to grant me the friendship of the noble heart ye ask me to calumniate,—the fellowship of the valiant right arm which never sheathed its sword until commanded so to do by him who alone had the right to command,—the example of that yet more unconquered and unconquerable nature, which from its temporary depression shall once more rise to make traitors quiver and turn pale. Do I repent of my devotion to this man? Ye have my answer,—no!"

"He is a spirited young fellow," said Fairfax to his colleagues; "it is a thousand pities he should die for his mistaken zeal."

"I would the youth could be spared," replied Cromwell; "but, the work which the Lord hath

given us to do, shall we not do it? True, the flesh wrestleth in his favour; and it may be that he is set for a snare unto us. Yet, it is written, 'thine eye shall have no pity,' and, 'thou shalt utterly destroy' all these accursed ones. Yea, sore is the conflict, but the truth shall prevail."

"And why this softness of heart towards the malignant?" rejoined Ireton. "Hath he not been one of the traitor Graham's most murderous and ruthless followers? and when was that delinquent known to spare for pity or tenderness. Assuredly, if we should let go out of our hands the man whom the Lord hath appointed to utter destruction, our lives shall be for his life, and our people for his people."

"And," added Grey, "I know not what ye may think; but, to my poor reason, it is obvious that Master Ireton's well applied quotation might stand as but too correct, if we let many of these spirited young fellows loose upon the world, to raise the standard against us for their mad dream of monarchy. Either their heads or ours must fall."

All were evidently struck with this last remark; and a silence ensued, during which Cromwell, with his hands clasped as in the act of

prayer, appeared to be asking the guidance of the Spirit as to whether he should now again steep his hands in the blood of innocence. Others followed his example in "seeking the Spirit," as they termed it, and in a modern court the effect of such a scene would be absolutely ludicrous; but the people of those times, even to the populace, were accustomed to see the mask of religion worn on all occasions, till at length the mask was more familiar than the natural face. The features of the latter, however, played no less beneath it.

At length, with a deep groan, Cromwell, looking at Ireton, uttered the words,—

"The Lord hath prevailed. I saw in a vision, and behold the words, 'Let the high praises of God be in the mouths of his saints, and a two-edged sword in their hands, to execute vengeance upon the heathen, and punishments upon the people; to bind their kings with chains and their nobles with fetters of iron; to execute upon them the judgments written; this honour have all his saints.' Verily, as I offered up a petition for the lad's life but now, the Lord answered me by these words. Surely it is a

sign. But I will refrain myself from counselling further in this matter."

"At least," interrupted Fairfax, "call upon the poor lad for his defence. He has none to plead for him; give him an opportunity of advocating his own cause."

"Alack! he hath had that already," returned Bradshaw, who was anxious to hurry the proceedings to a close, "and he hath rejected mercy. But since the General Fairfax asks it, we will give him the further favour of a hearing."

Turning to the prisoner, he continued—

"Albert Lyndesay: you are accused and convicted of rebellion against the State; of impiety towards the Lord and His blessed truth; of an active co-operation in the unnatural, cruel, and bloody wars, waged by the late man, Charles Stuart. You are guilty of high treason, and of all the murders, rapines, burnings, spoils, desolations, damages, and mischiefs, occasioned by and committed during the said wars. Lastly, you were found in arms, on your arrest, for purposes of lawless violence and disorder. You are called upon by the Court for your defence."

Lyndesay had, during the greater part of the

proceedings, been leaning against the front of the box in which he was placed, his head supported upon his hand. He had listened with contempt to the depositions of the witnesses, and imagined that no evidence so weak and worthless could for an instant be suffered to weigh against him, were his judges possessed of the most ordinary pretensions to reason or justice. When, therefore, he found, by Bradshaw's exhortation to him to betray and calumniate Montrose, that justice and equity were not likely to bear any part in that day's proceedings, and that even the semblance of them was dispensed with, he had given vent to the burst of indignant disdain which we have already related. His pale cheek had gathered as he spoke a bright spot of feverish red ; and his flashing eye darted scorn upon the base spirits who had invited him to buy life by the sacrifice of that romantic feeling towards his heroic leader which amounted to a passion with all those who were near Montrose's person.

Having given utterance to his long-suppressed emotions, the prisoner had relapsed into a state of apparent indifference ; and, even the address of Bradshaw, demanding his defence, failed to re-

produce the excitement he had before exhibited. With a deliberate and quiet self-possession he commenced the evidently hopeless task of refuting the charges asserted to be proved against him. His serious and earnest manner of defending himself astonished those who had seen his lively indignation when Montrose's name had been held up for vituperation. The sense of injustice under which he laboured produced no reproach,—no resentment;—and, with the air of a man prepared to die, yet willing to preserve life, could he do so by honourable means, he delivered his short reply.

“Gentlemen, for the sake of the hundreds assembled here, rather than for that of the tribunal before which I stand, and which has already fixed my fate, I wish to clear myself from the charges made against me. My God—the God whom I have served—commands that we abstain from all appearance of evil. For *His* sake, and for their's, I yield compliance to this last summons; wishing it, however, to be distinctly understood that I deny the legality of this Court before which I plead.

“I am accused of the murder of my fellow-

men. I call upon them, or any of them, to prove that ever during the course of my existence I have shed the blood of a fellow-creature otherwise than in battle, and I solemnly swear to the fact of never having done so. For the fate of noble enemies met in war I am not answerable. I have, God knows, executed to the utmost of my power this charge,"—and here he spread open the commission he had received from Charles—"committed to me by my King and *your* King," and the pleader's eyes turned round upon the multitudes in the hall—"signed by his own royal hand; commanding me to use mine to the death in defence of his throne and person. I have obeyed; and for those who have resisted and rebelled, and in so doing met their fate—their blood be upon their own heads!

"As for the charges of sedition and rebellion, my warrant for all I have done in my political as in my military career, lies in my authorized commission; and, in producing it, I have equally answered these charges. Of impiety towards God my heart tells me I have indeed too often been guilty; but as I would humbly lay at the footstool of the Almighty, who alone has the

power to pardon or to punish those sins which have been committed against Him alone; so in defending myself before a Court so constituted as is this, I am content simply to state, that never have I knowingly profaned the name of God, nor the fulfilment of His ordinances: that the whole principle of my conduct, as far as my fellow-creatures are concerned, has been an humble endeavour to promote His glory by efforts—alas! how vain!—to shield the altars of my country from the profanation which has befallen them—to save the land from fanaticism—from the curse which, I fear not to say, has all too soon fallen upon it. For this have I defended the anointed Prince and the ordained priest; for this would I, at the eleventh hour, when, as the indictment says, I was taken in arms, have shed my last drop of blood, had there been a hope of success. For this I have lived, and for this I am content to die. And as I have now spoken the truth—and as God knows the motives of my acts to have been neither profane nor impious, so may He judge me at the last day!”

Lyndesay ceased to speak, and there was a stillness of a few moments in the Hall. His

solemn and temperate manner had affected even his judges. The conference between Bradshaw and his colleagues was renewed; and as the same considerations of self-interest eventually wrought the same conclusion—which was, to sacrifice all who might stand in the way of their ambition—the President was preparing to pronounce the sentence, when a gentleman stepped forward to the bar, and craved permission to speak, before the proceedings terminated. It was Colonel Campbell.

Trusting but little himself to the effect of his efforts, but determined at any rate to ascertain the truth, he had on that morning taken the route to Westminster Hall, and arrived in time to hear the question respecting Lyndesay's engagements with Montrose, to which he had responded so indignantly. When he saw him thus brought to bay, and on the point of receiving the fatal sentence after his manly defence, he could contain himself no longer, but, thrusting himself forward, the gallant veteran requested to be heard.

“One moment's delay, my Lords, if you please. And hear me speak a word in behalf of this young

gentleman, who seems so backward in saying aught for himself. I am a Scotchman, and Major Lyndesay has fought in the ranks of my enemies,—under the banners which carried ruin and desolation amidst my native hills and vallies. Yet, when I hear him charged with rapine, and violence, and bloodshed, I cannot, my Lords, forbear to stand forward and say, what I know to be the truth,—that to him many a hearth in Scotland owes its security,—mine amongst the rest,—and that the poor and the weak ever found him ready to protect them from the violence to which the license of war, and the ruthlessness of other invaders, exposed them. I intreat you, my Lords, to consider this, before you condemn a brave young man to suffer an ignominious death for merely acting with courage and perseverance on the part which his early education and prejudices taught him to believe the right. Exile him, if you please: rid the country of all you fear as disturbers of its peace,—but spare the life of such an enemy,—or where shall persecution end?"

"Fear!" echoed Cromwell. "Is that a word for the ears of those who govern England?"

Who is it that ventures so far upon the forbearance of the Court, and thus addresses us?"

"I believe that I know this gentleman," rejoined General Fairfax. "Have I not, sir," said he, addressing the speaker, "the honour of addressing Colonel Campbell, of the Marquis of Argyle's second troop?"

"And the very person, then," exclaimed Fleetwood, "who, when his Lordship offered to him, as his faithful follower, a liberal portion of the sum which fell to the share of the Marquis, in the partition of the price received by the Scots for the delivering up of the late malignant, Charles Stuart,—disdainfully threw the money at the feet of his chieftain, saying, that he 'was no Judas, nor would receive the price of blood.' Inform us, sir, so please you—are you not that person?"

"I have the honour to be that gentleman,"—returned Colonel Campbell, somewhat superciliously. "But since it is of Major Lyndesay, and not of myself, that I come here to speak, I appeal to General Fairfax, as a soldier and a gentleman, (some stress was laid on this last word) whether

it be common justice that a man acting under a commission he holds as sacred as we have held our own, should suffer death simply for not deserting it!"

Fairfax looked distressed; but he knew too well his colleagues to indulge any hope of mercy for the accused, and contented himself with merely replying,—

"I respect your motives, Colonel Campbell; but after all that we have heard, and you yourself admitted, with regard to your own course of action, you can hardly expect that testimony so suspicious as yours can be of any avail. If you will take the advice of one who wishes you well, you will desist from an attempt which may be fraught with peril to yourself; though you cannot hope that it will be of any service to the offender for whom you plead. And now, let the trial proceed."

One of the writers of the Court handed to Bradshaw a paper, which, it appeared, had been formally prepared previously to the process, and, without any uncertainty as to its result; and immediately the President proceeded to read the sentence.

“ Albert Lyndesay,—We, the Lord’s chosen and elected servants, acting in His name and to His glory, for the safety and peace of His poor trembling and persecuted kingdoms of England and Scotland,—do sentence you, after having been carried hence to the Palace of St. James’s, where you take a last leave of your friends,—in one hour afterwards, to be removed to the dungeon of the Tower appropriated for condemned traitors, from whence, two days hence, you shall suffer the punishment of your evil and wicked deeds, by decapitation on the Tower Hill, in the sight of all the people. And the Lord have mercy on your soul !”

The prisoner remained with his arms folded, and his eyes steadfastly bent upon the ground, as the President pronounced the sentence. He betrayed no sign of emotion, excepting a death-like paleness. When it had been for a few moments concluded, he slowly raised his eyes towards the judges, and replied in a voice, calm and unbroken,—

“ You have shed the blood of the just in the midst of you—and why should mine be spared ! The scaffolds are daily reeking with the blood

of England's best and bravest, and in pouring out mine, you will add but a drop to the ocean of your already incurred guilt. Nevertheless, at the great day of judgment, even for my death you shall be required to give account. May God forgive you, as from my heart I do!"

He turned to leave the Court; but the movement was arrested at that instant by a shriek from a female voice, so wild and mournful that it seemed as if the very heart-strings must have burst as it broke forth. There was a trifling bustle near the door, and a figure was carried out, apparently in a swoon, veiled and muffled, however, so that only a slight outline of the form was visible.

Lyndesay required not the aid of sight to identify the object of general curiosity, for the voice had told its own tale. And if then first that tone of anguish touched a responsive chord in his own bosom, and if he felt how entirely the darkest despair had succeeded to the brightest hope; and, as he accompanied his guards back to the prison, drew his hand across those eyes which would never have been moistened for his *own* sorrows,—surely we shall not accuse that mo-

mentary impulse as either unmanly or unbecoming.

“I might have sworn there was a woman in the case,” muttered Colonel Campbell, as he slowly quitted the hall. “And so this poor lad has madly rushed upon destruction, when, had he but been ruled by me, he would now have been safe at Paris or the Hague.”

CHAPTER X.

O, Woman ! in our hours of ease,
Uncertain, coy, and hard to please,
And variable as the shade,
By the light quivering aspen made ;
When pain and anguish wring the brow,
A ministering angel thou !

WALTER SCOTT.

As, unlike his illustrious predecessors in suffering, Albert Lyndesay was not deemed sufficiently distinguished in name and lineage to entitle him to the honour of a scaffold in front of Westminster Hall, his sentence had decreed his removal to the Tower, previous to his execution on the usual spot for condemned traitors, the Tower Hill. He was, however, according to the ordinary course, carried from Westminster to St. James's Palace, where the noble victims who had preceded him had awaited their last sad summons to the scaffold;

and here those friends had access to him, who, except in the instance of very close relationship, were denied all intercourse when once the culprit had entered the condemned cell of the Tower.

Placed in a strongly guarded apartment on the ground floor, which was furnished, in addition to the common heavy moveables, with writing materials and a few books, our hero was left alone.

For a time he sat motionless, surveying the place, yet hardly realizing his situation, and overcome by that kind of morbid languor which often succeeds to strong excitement. But by degrees, as nature recruited her powers, the mind resumed her sway, and a vivid sense of the fatal result of the last few hours came across him.

For him, then, the vista of life was now ended. The door which had just closed upon him had shut out for ever all which youth fondly dreams to behold in the long, dim future—the rose-garlanded bowers of love; the diamond-tipped pinnacles of ambition; the realities which the world offers in abundance to the energies of a young and vigorous mind; the hoped-for opportunities of usefulness, in working out theories for

the honour of God and the good of man ; the vast mass of knowledge, of information, which floats within view of the youthful intellect, and which, when healthful, it aims at grasping ; the works of beauty and of art, of glory and magnificence, which this earth holds, and which the young eye fain would dwell upon ere its light be quenched for ever.

All was over, and the chapter of life had become a blank ; for, without a future, the past was unimportant ; and a few hours of dreary imprisonment were now his all—except eternity.

Except eternity ! How many of us speak thus ! How many more *act as if they thought* eternity the mere appendage, and this world's existence the grand career, the ultimate object for which we were called into being. And when death comes to those around us, we follow them not into the regions of the invisible, but no less real, scene where their life indeed commences. And we pity the loved one taken from our love ; as if, like ourselves, she had lost her all ; and we stand aghast when the deadly shaft arrests the great and the illustrious—the statesman in the senate, or the warrior in the field, as if the change for *them* were

indeed what to our mortal senses it exhibits itself—the homage of nations and the boards of princes for the lonely worm-tenanted sepulchre,—the vigour of warm blood, animated by genius and courage, for the cold corruption of the grave. So powerful is the influence of time and sense! so completely does our nature confine itself within the bounds of the visible!

Yet there are moments when the shadows of the everlasting hills are cast upon our path. The deep silence of midnight; the recent view of death; the untiring ripple of the boundless ocean; the unsatisfied aspirations of the human mind towards the perfect and the infinite—the restless longing of the heart for a love and sympathy which exists but in the ideal—all these intimations, as it were, of eternity, are yet too transient and too vague to balance in the human mind, apart from Christian belief, the real and tangible form of present things.

But if there be a situation which brings down upon us, in all its power, the reality of the world to come, it is, perhaps, that in which our hero now found himself; that of a man in the full tide of youth, and health, and energy, whom the sen-

tence of the law has doomed to perish. In sickness the approaches of death are gradual; the mind by degrees inures itself to the thought, and the weakness or suffering of the body diminishes the power of the shock upon the frame. In sudden death reflection comes not; but, under a sentence of condemnation, all the interests, hopes, and impulses, which had animated the living being, are at once annihilated; and, with vigour unimpaired, the powers of thought must be transferred from the area of time to that of eternity.

What pictures must the imagination draw!—what animating hopes!—what thrilling fears!—what anxiety to be gone, and to shorten the feverish interval of suspense!—yet what natural shrinking at the dreadful gulf to be passed. In the case even of an innocent man, and a Christian, what a trial and triumph of faith!

Somewhere about two hours had passed since Lyndesay's incarceration at St. James's, and his mind was beginning to recover its equilibrium. He rose from his knees, and with slow steps, his arms folded upon his chest, and his eyes bent upon the ground, he began to pace the room. Refreshments had been brought in, which remained un-

tasted on the table ; and, as he passed towards the spot where, on a projecting shelf, a few books lay for the spiritual comfort of those immured in this gloomy apartment, mechanically he raised his eyes, and, from the strong force of habit, he loitered to read the titles inscribed upon their backs.

Not much enlightened by the survey, he passed on, and was soon again lost in deep musings till at length the incessant movement induced a feeling of weariness ; and he stopped, unconsciously, opposite to a large clock which was fixed in the wall, and which told at the moment the expiration of the first hour after noon. The machine at once fixed his attention—or rather his glance, and he remained contemplating it, until a noise at the other end of the room, where was the door, aroused him.

The key had moved in the door without his observation, so deep had been his reverie ; and, when he turned from the attitude in which he had stood long fixed in front of the clock, the door had been opened and again closed, with the sound which had at last drawn his attention.

Two persons, however, had been admitted, and Lyndesay, on turning round, beheld, standing in

the interior, the aged clergyman, Howard; and, by his side, the Lady Katharine Wentworth.

He was silent for a few moments, but his pale face and quivering lip sufficiently betrayed his strong emotion. Advancing a few steps, he was met by Katharine, who, hastily coming forward, threw herself into his arms.

"Katharine—beloved! most precious! why did you come! Oh! my God! I could have borne all but this!"

The tone of bitter grief in which Lyndesay spoke these words, seemed to augment the anguish of his affianced, and she sank into a chair unable to articulate. Lyndesay silently held out his hand to Howard, who pressed it with fervency; then, by a powerful effort regaining his self-command, he said,—

"Be calm, I entreat you, my Katharine, and hear me. Would my heart permit me, I could chide thee, my love, for taking this step, which may place thy life in danger."

"My life! Oh! Albert! what is it worth now?"

Lyndesay saw that despair had for a moment shaken the usually firm tone of Katharine's

feeling, and that on him alone it depended to sustain them both during the painful scene. And true it was that, having passed the last few hours in perpetually recurring fits of swooning, body and mind were alike weakened, and her fortitude had given way.

He spoke calmly.

"Your life, my Katharine, is the gift of God, and as such must be cherished until you are called upon to resign it. Further," he said, tenderly placing his arm around her, "you must sometimes think of one who has loved you with no common love, and persevere to the end in faith and hope—aye, in time, may be, in peace—for his sake."

"I could have died for your sake, Albert—but to live for it—without you—oh, no! it is impossible."

"Think this: that as now every half hour brings nearer the time of our separation, so, when I shall have passed that bourne, which, believe me, I do not fear, every hour you live will be so much advance towards the period of our reunion."

"But how to pass the interval!" said Katharine, with a shudder, and in a tone which betrayed the intense suffering which had taken hold upon her.

"You will not be left comfortless, for God is all powerful. At first—I pretend not to deny it—the stroke must try your fortitude; but our merciful Creator has ordained that even with those who love most dearly, time shall soften the pangs of such separations. Wherever you are you will be loved, my Katharine; and in time, God grant that your own heart may be able to open to new affections."

"Never, Albert, never. I shall go down to the grave mourning as your wife,—your widowed bride. It was for that purpose that I came here."

He looked in her face, unable to comprehend her words. In an instant the blood mounted to her brow, and the maiden delicacy which had given way to a stronger feeling, returned in full force as she stammered,—

"I seem very bold,—unwomanly; but can you not comprehend me? No,—then I *must* utter it. Albert, once before you asked me to become your wife immediately, and I refused: now I am ready to fulfil my pledge."

Overcome by this testimony of a devotion which prompted such a sacrifice, Lyndesay covered his face with his hands as he replied,—

“ My sentence of this morning annulled your pledge.”

“ Oh, no! Oh, no! that cannot be,” she said. “ If the thought of other duties prompted me to refuse completing our union until circumstances should be more auspicious, I am sufficiently punished by this dreadful sentence, which cuts off that future so securely reckoned on. I should then have had the *right* which,” she hesitated, and coloured slightly, “ which the marriage tie alone can give me, to share your last hours of captivity,—to sustain you, to cheer you—you, who have no mother,—no sister or brother, or dear friend near you in this awful hour. Oh, Albert! do not reject me!”

“ And to bear a dishonoured name for ever!” returned her lover.

“ Dishonoured!—then is my own so equally, for these tyrants found their first victim in Wentworth. But, no! the disgrace is theirs; and fear not, but that other times will account it a glory to have fallen a martyr in such a cause as yours and his.”

Lyndesay observed the quick transition of feeling which his words had kindled, arousing in

Katharine all the pride of her race. He smiled, as, wishing to divert her mind from the one sad theme, he replied,—

“ You have the courage and constancy of a heroine, my Katharine: try to have the fortitude. I am loath to disturb your confidence in the judgment of future ages on these times; but much I fear that, when the enthusiasm of our cause has passed away, cold calculating policy will fail to do it justice. But most probably on this, like every other subject, men will entertain, as at present, two opinions.”

The slight spark of heroism which had animated Katharine for a moment, had passed away while Lyndesay spoke, and when he ceased she only said in a low, sad tone,—

“ Will you comply ?”

“ Dearest,—no,” he said; “ it were a sacrifice to selfishness which I cannot, must not make, to suffer that, for a few hours’ alleviation of my sorrow, you should incur all the consequences of this step. Believe me, the thought of your devotion will sweeten to me the bitter cup which I am about to drink, though, alas! it makes me but the more sensible of all which that draught deprives me of——”

He stopped short, and turned away his face; but the maiden, rising, gently took his hand and addressed him.

“ Listen to me, Albert. You have loved me, as you say, with no common love, and through years of vicissitude and trial; but even *you* cannot comprehend the all-engrossing, all-inspiring nature of a woman’s love, once worthily given and returned. It is her life,—her world,—her past, present, and to come,—the pivot around which all her thoughts revolve—thoughts which have for object the devotion of her being to the happiness of another, finding therein her own. For this, no act is a sacrifice. Deprived of all hope of such a lot in the future, will you deny me the remembrance of it in the past?”

Affected by the serious tone of this appeal, Lyndesay turned towards Howard for support. The old clergyman had not interfered, unwilling to intrude upon a scene too sacred for witnesses; and though obliged, through the nature of circumstances, to become such, he had retired to the other end of the apartment, and was apparently busily examining the few volumes which had previously attracted Lyndesay’s attention.

Called upon, however, to take part in the dis-

cussion, he returned towards the table, when, struck with the haggard expression of Albert's countenance, he exclaimed,—

“My good friend, you are suffering from exhaustion. Before we enter into the discussion of any case of casuistry, let me entreat you to take some refreshment, or nature will give way.”

Lyndesay smiled mournfully.

“You forget, my dear sir, that in forty-eight hours this body is to be lifeless. To what purpose, then, your care?”

“*That* I know not, neither do you,” said Howard, as, pouring out a cup of wine, he handed it with a roll towards our hero; “but such being the ordination of Providence, it must needs be good.”

“If for no other end,” observed Lyndesay, taking the offered refreshments, “than to avoid the imputation of fear, it is, I believe, as well to support the physical strength; for were the body to waver, they would say the spirit quailed.”

Katharine shuddered; but taking advantage of the pause, she passed her arm through that of Howard, and, leading him aside, explained to him the point at issue between her lover and herself.

As she proceeded, she became more and more agitated; for she observed that the minute hand of the large clock had passed the half-hour after one; and she knew that at two Lyndesay was to be removed to the Tower; when, but for the intervention of her proposed plan, their final parting must take place.

Lyndesay was alive to this also; and, as he followed her with his eyes, he counted the moments which they had yet to dwell upon that lovely countenance, so agitated with conflicting emotions, so earnest in entreaty, so pale with grief and horror.

To his manly nature the duty of not conceding the point appeared so clear, that he doubted not for a moment as to Howard's decision. To involve the woman he loved in the consequences of his actions, and to suffer her, in a moment of excited feeling, to take a step she might repent, appeared to Lyndesay, accustomed to the friction and hardness of the world, as unworthy of an honourable and generous man. But Howard was accustomed to judge of things from within, uninfluenced by the modes and opinions of the world, and to bring all to the simple standard of

right and wrong; his sole method of fixing this, being the plain rule of Scripture. Since to his eyes the proposal of Katharine seemed but an act of kindness, which the relative situation of parties rendered natural and laudable, he hesitated not a moment on hearing her tale; but, much to the surprise of our hero, advanced towards him, and said, with an earnestness which left no doubt of his sincerity,—

“If you would not break this poor child’s heart, my son, you will give her the consolation of ministering to your last hours; which, as you know, it were impossible she should, save as your wife.”

Staggered at this speech, Lyndesay stood confounded. His resolution, hitherto so firm, was shaken by the remonstrance of one so pious, so pure, and withal, so true to the Lady Katharine, as was the worthy clergyman. She perceived the impression which had been made, and pointing to the clock, said, “a few minutes, and we are too late.”

Howard took from his pocket a manual of the Common Prayer of the Church of England; and, placing himself in the rear of the desk whereon

lay the writing materials, he beckoned the pair to take their station before it. Hurried, confused, and above all, much impressed by Howard's suggestion that his refusal would augment the weight of Katharine's calamity, Lyndesay, hardly knowing what he did, placed himself by Katharine's side, in front of the temporary altar.

"You would not counsel me to wrong," he murmured.

"So may God help me in my hour of need," returned the minister. "Witness, in pledge of my sincere conviction, my own participation in the act. But—a ring. Which of you possesses one?"

"And witnesses," returned Lyndesay. "Are they not necessary to the validity of this act?"

Howard hesitated for a moment.

"I myself will attest the marriage immediately," said he; "and you, my friend, must declare, in presence of witnesses, the Lady Katharine to be your wife. This procedure will meet the present unhappily relaxed requisitions of the law on this subject—unhappily, though they serve our present object."

"Katharine," said Lyndesay, regarding her

fixedly, "you hear the terms. Are you still resolved?"

The Lady Katharine raised her eyes, brimful of tears, to those of her affianced husband; and, without a moment's deliberation, placed her hand within his. The service commenced.

But still the ring was wanting. When the course of the ceremony demanded its production, the old clergyman suddenly paused, and the bride, immediately recollecting the cause, colouring deeply, turned towards Lyndesay. Any other ring would have served the purpose; but, in strict compliance with the deep mourning which forbade the use of ornaments, all present had laid aside even the accustomed adornments of their fingers.

In a moment Lyndesay called to mind the jewel which he wore concealed in his bosom. It hung suspended by a ribbon which passed through a small gold ring from which the gem was pendent. Quick as thought, he cut the cord, and plucking the valued relic from his vest, he placed the slender ring upon the finger of Katharine, the jewel still hanging from it. As he did so, the words of the Dominican recurred to him—"Love and birthright, both gone."

The service proceeded without further interruption; and as the minister pronounced his blessing, the expiration of the second hour after noon sounded upon the clock. Lyndesay had scarcely time to clasp his bride to his bosom, ere the door opened, and the officers appeared with a summons for his removal to the Tower.

The principal officer on duty on this occasion appeared disposed to extend his prerogative to the utmost. He was one of those low-minded men of vulgar extraction, whom a revolution raises to "a little brief authority," only to exhibit, as it were, the unfitness of men, except in very few instances, for any other station than that into which it has pleased God to call them.

"Thou cam'st not to thy place by accident,
It is the very place God meant for thee :"

says a gifted writer of our own day. And it is because men believe the exact reverse of this sentiment, so pious and so true, that religion and good government give way.

Colonel Hopper, bred a skinner, illustrated these remarks to the full. His small contracted brow, and flat head, showed the very limited development of the intellectual organs; and amongst the moral faculties, phrenologists would

undoubtedly have found the preponderance in that of self-esteem. His short, thick-set figure gave to his dignified gait, on entering our hero's prison, the air of a strut; and individuals less sad might have found entertainment in listening to the interrogations which it pleased him to inflict upon his prisoner.

"Pray, young man, are you the malignant, Albert Lyndesay?"

"I was tried by that name," returned our hero.

"And will be executed by it, as seems likely," sneeringly retorted Hopper. "But I have to inform you in turn, young master, that I am Colonel Hopper; and that to me the Council have committed the custody of your person, with orders to remove you immediately to the Tower."

"I am ready to accompany you," said Lyndesay. "But first—when will my friends obtain admission to see me again?"

"Your friends!" repeated the consequential little official, looking upon the Lady Katharine and Howard with a sort of "touch-me-not" air. "You take your leave of them here, Sir Cavalier."

The traitor's lodging at the Tower does not provide accommodation for such as these;"—and he nodded his head with a sardonical smile in the direction of the Lady Katharine.

Lyndesay assumed on the instant a bearing lofty and dignified beyond what Katharine had ever beheld in him before, as he replied in a clear voice, so raised that all present might hear his words,—

"This lady, Colonel Hopper, is my wife. As such I believe she possesses a claim to admission even to the period of my execution."

He looked full in the face of Hopper as he pronounced these words; then turned to the other officials who were present, and who—many of them of better feeling than their Colonel—were already enlisted on the side of the prisoner by the nobleness of his bearing, and affected by the deep sorrow and the beauty of Katharine. There were murmurs of "Surely"—"It's the rule"—"There's no denying that——"

But Hopper remained unmoved. "I obey the General's orders," said he. "General Cromwell knows of no wife; or if he does he heeds not, for he particularly commanded that this malignant

should receive none of his friends after his committal to the Tower, on any pretence whatever."

"This lady will forward to General Cromwell an explanation of the circumstances of her union with me," returned Lyndesay, almost disdainfully—"and will await here his further orders. Is it not so, my love?" said he, turning to Katharine.

She gave a weeping assent, for she had before found Oliver Cromwell inexorable.

"Am I to understand, sir," continued Lyndesay, "that this gentleman, my spiritual adviser, is also to be excluded from aiding the preparations of my last hours?"

"The Council will supply you with a minister," returned Hopper. "You will hear the truth during the two days you have to live. Be thankful, young man."

Lyndesay saw that nothing was to be gained, and that an altercation with this man would but prolong a scene already too exquisitely painful. He wrung the hand of Howard; then advanced a step or two towards Katharine. She read his thoughts in the expression of his face,

and saw that it was final. Before he could utter a word, she had fainted.

“I am ready,” said Lyndesay, calmly. Not another word was spoken, but his feet and hands were ironed. The cold dew started to his brow as, leaving the apartment, he turned a last look upon that dear form, spared in insensibility this moment of bitter anguish.

CHAPTER XI.

My daughter ! O, my ducats ! O, my daughter !
Fled with a Christian ? O, my Christian ducats !
Justice ! the law ! my ducats, and my daughter !

MERCHANT OF VENICE.

THE party which escorted our hero to the Tower, judging it inexpedient to excite the spirit of the citizens by the sight of his youth and manly bearing, proceeded with their prisoner to the water-side, there to take boat, with intention to disembark at the fatal Traitor's Gate. For this purpose several of the small craft which were plying near to the Whitehall pier, were engaged : and Lyndesay was placed in one of them, his arms closely pinioned, and on either side of him a stout trooper, with firelock loaded and primed, ready to make a short conclusion of any attempt at resistance or escape.

The boat was rowed by two watermen, in dress and manner resembling others of their class; but exceeding them, if possible, in their clamorous outcry in the first instance for the job, and afterwards in the moody and obstinate silence which they preserved towards the party, in spite of some efforts made by the troopers to turn the occasion into a subject for coarse jokes and ribaldry.

Lyndesay, however, remarked that one of the watermen kept his eyes constantly fixed upon him, a circumstance which induced him, in his turn, to take some notice of the man, who, otherwise, would have passed unobserved.

On a closer survey of his features, he fancied that they were not quite strange to him, though when or where he had previously seen him, he was quite unable to recall. Anxious to hear the tone of his voice, Albert addressed him, inquiring how much time the passage might further require.

With an apparent carelessness, the man replied, "Ten minutes, or more, my master, and a good riddance of you; for I've another job, and a better, to do before night."

"You seem as anxious to rid yourself of our company, my friend, at present, as you were a little while ago to secure it."

"Ha! ha!" exclaimed the boatman. "Next time we sail together, young gentleman, I hope we'll make a longer voyage."

The soldiers who considered this last turn as a very humorous pleasantry upon the peculiar circumstances of Lyndesay's situation, indulged in a loud laugh; and one of them, slapping the waterman on the shoulder, exclaimed,

"Ah! bravo, comrade!—you've found your tongue. I thought it was too loud a clapper to be long quiet."

But no attempts—jests, civil speeches, or rudeness—could elicit from the boatman another syllable during the passage; and when he at length landed them opposite to the doomed portal, he was observed to turn his boat, and row it back with astonishing rapidity in the direction whence they had come.

It was not without a shudder that Lyndesay passed the gate, and found himself within those grim walls, from which he knew there was no exit for him, save by death. But he hurried on

with as much speed as the heavy irons he wore would allow ; anxious to be relieved, in the solitude of his cell, from the harassing and overbearing punctilio of Colonel Hopper's attendance.

But the worthy official seemed but little inclined to grant him that relief. After an exordium on the bounty of General Cromwell, who, in consideration of the arduousness of the post he held in guarding so hardened a malefactor as Lyndesay, had sent him a flask of generous Rhenish,—with a repetition of the General's orders that no person, friend or enemy, save one, should be admitted to the cell of the condemned man—he concluded by inquiring, in the General's name, when Lyndesay would receive a visit from the spiritual comforter, who was the one exception to the general rule of exclusion.

“One of your own ministers, I conclude, you would offer me?” inquired Albert.

“No less a person, young master, than the blessed and renowned minister, Shimei Haman.”

“Thank the General in my name for the goodness of his intention,” returned Lyndesay ; “but

say to him, that, deprived of the spiritual assistance and the services of my own Church, the introduction of a stranger on the present occasion would tend rather to discompose my thoughts than to bring them to a state of fitness for eternity."

"Unhappy man!" ejaculated Hopper, endeavouring to sigh; though, if he had a regret, it was at being so long detained from his Rhenish. "Lost in utter perdition! It is my duty then to inform you, that in case of your refusal, the General's orders are peremptory that the reverend minister shall still, without your consent, be admitted to your cell."

Lyndesay bowed his head in silence. "At least," said he, "grant me the boon of writing materials, for I have a few dispositions to make, which I would gladly commit to honourable keeping."

"To mine, doubtless?"

Having no better mode of expressing himself; and at a loss to find other hands to which to confide his papers, save those of the self-complacent little Colonel, or the Rev. Shimei, between whom he did not hesitate, our hero bowed again.

Nothing more was wanting than this implied compliment, to animate the would-be honourable official to instant compliance. In a few moments Lyndesay was furnished with pens, ink, and paper, sufficient for the assignment of a kingdom; and the Colonel betook himself to his Rhenish.

Left to himself, our hero lost no time in drawing up a written declaration of the marriage, which had been solemnised an hour before, between himself and Katharine; in virtue of which he bequeathed to her all claims which he now possessed, or might hereafter be found to have possessed, on name, fortune, or estate. It was with some satisfaction that he contemplated the possibility that Katharine's act of generous self-sacrifice might possibly meet some guerdon, in the accession to a brilliant reversion, of his claim to which he had reason to think she herself held the proofs; and so much had this idea pleased his imagination, that, as he put the seal to the document, his countenance exhibited a degree of complacency, little in accordance with his present prospects.

It was at this juncture that his attention was roused by the tones of a shrill voice in the corri-

dor, leading to his cell ; so shrill, indeed, that even the iron-bound door of the prison, offered not too dense a medium for the transmission of some few words of a dialogue between its owner and Colonel Hopper. The communications of the latter gentleman—whose voice, thick and encumbered, and by no means rendered more distinct by the Rhenish, partook something of the nature of his person—could only be inferred by the replies.

“Ah, well a day ! a very limb of Satan ! heart hard as a stone—no grace. Alas ! Oh ! thank you kindly, Colonel—a glass of Rhenish when the work is done—nothing so pleasant. Disturbed you—return, I pray, and I will join you when I have done the work. I shall strike the rock and the waters will flow. Wherefore we will say, Allelujah ! for a blessed dispensation is it for this youth, that I——”

But here the door of the cell was opened, and Albert beheld the figure of the speaker. Thin, gaunt, and bony as ever, the minister whom he expected to see, looked still taller by the side of the very diminutive Colonel, which prevented our hero from observing that the Rev. Shimei

had lost something of his height. He was habited in his usual dress of liver-coloured cloth, and his low hat was drawn over his face. Ere he passed the threshold of the cell, he waived his hand solemnly in the direction of the Colonel's apartments, dismissing him with the words, "Anon, brother." Then addressing the turnkey, he added with a sigh,—

"Should the youth prove obdurate, we shall not have the heart to taste our brother's Rhenish. Wherefore, friend, leave us for a season without interruption, and when I rap here—see—on this panel,—then give me egress. Markest thou?"

The turnkey assented, and the next moment the saintly speaker found himself alone with our hero.

The latter, who considered his visit in the light of an intrusion, neither moved nor spoke; but, after having raised his head to make a formal acknowledgment of his visitor's entrance in the first instance, resumed his occupation of writing without taking further notice.

For a few moments the minister stood regarding him in silence,—then, to the infinite astonish-

ment of the prisoner, he moved towards the only unoccupied seat which the cell afforded, and, throwing himself upon it, burst into a wild fit of shrill and uncontrollable laughter.

Perhaps our hero's first movement was a slight inclination to feel uneasy, at a conduct exhibiting so strange an absence of common decency or feeling. But recollecting that any expression of indignation in his present position would be both absurd and useless, he contented himself with simply inquiring the cause of the reverend gentleman's mirth.

The question seemed to increase it; and Albert, who speedily lost all resentment in curiosity as to the possible cause of so much merriment, turned round and earnestly regarded the minister.

His face was hid in his hands, and his thin figure almost buried in the folds of his coat, which appeared much too long for him. At length he recovered himself sufficiently to utter a few broken sentences, each of which increased the amazement of our hero.

“Ave, Maria—the Rhenish has done its work, —and the few brains yon idiot's head ever holds are addled. But to think that not only he—but

thou—thou, Albert Lyndesay, shouldst be such a dolt!—to ask me calmly why I laugh! and now to stand amazed because thou hearest an Ave instead of a sermon! Truly I have not tarried among the saints for nothing, that thou, foolish boy, shouldst take me for one of them.”

As she said this, Ninon threw off the spacious wide-brimmed hat—which, drawn over her features, had concealed them—and revealed her own dry and furrowed countenance, rendered sharper than its wont by the circumstance of her having cut her grey hair, usually confined under a high cap, quite short, and by the total absence of head-gear. She got up, and flinging off the long coat, her lean figure appeared in its tight-fitting bodice; and, at the same time, she released her petticoat, which had been looped up on the adoption of the hose, and suffered it to fall round her figure.

In another moment she divested herself of these last accoutrements, and, flinging the whole suit towards Albert, she exclaimed,—

“Now, dreamer, for thy conversion. I promised to effect it. The gay young Cavalier shall leave these walls a solemn Puritan saint. Hasten; for

we know not how soon curious eyes may be upon us."

"But where?—how?—what will become of *you*?" demanded our hero, startled by the unexpected apparition, and hesitating as to whether he ought to accept the proffered rescue.

"It matters not where—nor how; and for myself,—leave the case *to* myself," returned the old woman. "Suffice it for thee that these habits have been worn by the Rev. Shimei, whom thou must personate in thy exit as did I in my entrance. Meanwhile, I adopt thine. Our Colonel is by this time too besotted to note the difference of our stature,—in fact, the little man regards all as giants, since all tower over him. For the rest, thou must compose thy voice to a nasal twang; sigh audibly, and hold a kerchief to thy face to dry the tears caused by thy own obduracy; pull thy beaver low; swing from side to side with a stiff gait and a slight stoop. And finally: shouldst thou receive any interruption by question or remark, show this seal. It is the signet of General Cromwell."

"Of Oliver Cromwell!" repeated Lyndesay, in amazement.

"Of no less a person,—but for all explana-

tions be content to wait. Once beyond these walls, proceed down Tower Street to the west, and thou shalt find a certain lane called Harp Lane, conducting to Thames Street. At the door of the principal building in this lane, the Baker's Hall, a man will be standing with a sack upon his shoulders. Say to him the word 'Jacopo,' and if he shall answer thee, 'The Dominican,' thou hast thy man. Follow him at once, and I need tell thee no more. Hasten."

Lyndesay lost no time in obeying her; the less reluctantly, that the possession of Cromwell's signet seal appeared to afford some ground to hope for the safety of Ninon, who had thus been able to penetrate into the highest places. He knew that to deliberate was to lose the fruit of so much effort, and, accordingly, suffered Ninon to assist him in striking off his irons with the tools which she had brought concealed, and in rapidly accoutering himself in the sober livery for which he exchanged his own yet more-solemn suit of black.

In the latter, the old woman equipped herself; and, taking her seat at the table, with her back to the door, deeply engaged, as it appeared, in penmanship, she bade Lyndesay rap upon the panel.

The summons was obeyed; and our hero, with an apparently stifled sob, left the cell, holding his handkerchief to his countenance. As he heard the heavy grating of the bolts which were drawn upon him, a feeling of compunction seized him. But he proceeded without obstacle, till he reached the room occupied by Colonel Hopper, through which he was under the necessity of passing.

The intoxicated man had not forgotten the promise of the minister to pledge him in his Rhenish, and, rising from his seat, he clamorously called for its fulfilment. But his own potations had already been too deep for this effort, and, with the wine flagon in his hand, he fell a dead weight upon the floor.

Surprised at the quick effects of the liquor, Lyndesay in an instant suspected that it had been drugged. He profited, however, by the auspicious result, and contrived to thread his way, through the knowledge which his former detention in the place had given him, to the south portal of the Tower. To his surprise, he met with hardly any individual in his route,—a circumstance easily explained, had he been aware

that General Cromwell had proclaimed a holiday to those on duty in the Tower, who, in reward for past services, were to enjoy on that day a sort of fête, which had been prepared for all the principal officers in one of the Royal parks.

On this account, the prisoners in the fortress were close in ward, and our hero passed unchallenged by sentinel until he reached the outer gate. The soldiers here demanded the pass-word; but a sight of the well-known signet, with a grave shake of the head from the reverend minister, silenced all question or remark; and Albert Lyndesay once more found himself at large without the precincts of the Tower.

He took the route indicated by Ninon, and, on turning into Harp Lane, he immediately recognised in the bearer of the sack, stationed at the Baker's Hall, the rude waterman, who had alluded so ominously to the next voyage they should make together.

Almost before he could address him, the other ejaculated, "the Dominican;" and, without seeming further to notice our hero, received a cargo in exchange for the one he bore; and speedily took the way to the water gate, which was

situated in that part of the old city called Petty Wales. Adjoining this gate was the Galley Quay, where floated the merchant-ships of Italy and Bordeaux ; and towards one of these, apparently, by its cargo, in a state of preparation for sailing, the waterman directed the little skiff, in which, in complete silence, he had placed himself and Albert.

On reaching the vessel, a shout of joyous laughter rang upon the ear of our hero ; but he saw no one, and was conducted below ; and the galley immediately set sail. It was not until they had cleared the Thames, that the door of the cabin opened, and the bright eyes of Lilius appeared, in full radiance of triumph.

“ Master Lyndesay, I would present to you my husband, whose liberty you gained the evening before the field of Newbury. To-day he has paid the debt he owed you.”

“ And nobly he has overpaid it,” returned our hero, rising and grasping the hand of the young waterman. “ He has given me not freedom only, but life,—I am now the debtor. But how long has this honest fellow called thee wife, fair dame ? for, as I well remember, such dear hope was prohibited him by thy father.”

“Since this morning,” returned Liliás, somewhat abashed, but endeavouring to cloak the feeling under an air of carelessness. “Walter and I used the moments in uniting ourselves for escape together, which, as I have heard since, another pair employed in furnishing themselves with a pretext to share each other’s prison. Nay, Master Lyndesay, do not sigh: the Lady Katharine surely will meet no injury.”

“Happier your fate,” thought Albert; but he replied: “It seems to me that I must appear in thy sight, Mistress Liliás, as but a sorry pretender to honesty, since thy father’s wardrobe hath furnished my passport, without, as I suspect, his concurrence.”

“He but meets his desert,” said Liliás, bitterly. “He persecuted you, and gave his testimony to bring about your death, and his very peculiarity of suit hath gained your freedom. He disowned me, his child—he threatened to disinherit and beggar me if I forsook not the man whom long ago I swore to him I would marry, and none else. He has lost his daughter for ever; and what he hath so long unjustly withheld, she has taken as her right.”

Liliás, whose cheeks were wet with tears of

mingled indignation and sorrow, showed, as she spoke, two bags of gold which she had been long amassing for the occasion from the sums occasionally doled out to her by her father. But as she marked our hero's countenance, and observed the grave and sorrowful expression with which he regarded the money, her face crimsoned over with shame.

"I see, Master Lyndesay," she said, "you think worse of me for this. But I am not lost to honour and honesty; though a daughter's wrongs have goaded me at length to do myself the justice a selfish and hard-hearted parent withheld. But you hold in your possession a signet seal, for the disposal of which I stand pledged. See if I will not be faithful where I have to do with honour——"

Lyndesay handed to her the seal of Oliver Cromwell; and Lillas, leaning over the cabin side, immediately dropped it into the water.

To such of our readers as are interested in the fate of the minister's daughter, it may not be amiss to add here, that, after a few years' residence on the coast of France, during which her husband was employed in the transmission of

letters between the Royalists at home and abroad (a correspondence which their persevering schemes rendered incessant), Lilius was summoned to return to England by a letter from Alice, whose ample jointure had long since procured her a marriage with a rich silversmith of the City of London. This letter contained the intelligence that the Rev. Shimei Haman, having in his lucubrations long overstepped the bounds of reason and common sense, had been consigned to a mad-house by the rapacity of his relatives, the absence of his daughter affording to them the hope of possessing themselves of his hoarded wealth. Though not absolutely mad, the weak-minded minister was rapidly becoming so under this treatment, and his only resource lay in recalling his daughter, whom he had sworn never to see again.

Lilius arrived in time to receive her father's forgiveness, ere the last spark of reason left him, and he passed the remainder of his life a maniac. His large possessions were assigned to his daughter.

CHAPTER XII.

What is that spell, that thus his lawless train
Confess and envy, yet oppose in vain ?
What should it be, that thus their faith can bind ?
The power of thought—the magic of the mind !
Link'd with success, assumed and kept with skill,
That moulds another's weakness to its will ;
Wields with their hands, but, still to these unknown,
Makes e'en their mightiest deeds appear his own.

THE CORSAIR.

SINCE the reader, however his natural benevolence may have led him to sympathize with our hero's joy at being delivered from circumstances by no means propitious, may probably partake less of the eager interest with which he drew from his companions every detail of the accomplishment of his freedom, during their tedious passage to Caen, where the vessel in part unloaded her cargo ; and since we ourselves, if such be the case, entirely coincide with the reader, we shall take as hasty a

notice of the particular means which were applied to bring about that most desirable consummation, as is consistent with the necessity of identifying the actual with the possible and probable.

It will be remembered that the Lady Katharine's efforts to gain a private interview with Lilius Haman had been overruled by the peremptory mandate of General Cromwell, which, under cover of courtesy, compelled the minister's daughter to become a guest in his family during the short remaining period when suit or application on Lyndesay's behalf might avail. But could it be that Cromwell, no mean calculator upon character, and himself surrounded by female relatives, knew so little of woman's nature as to suppose that in withdrawing her from the sphere of daring agency she might have planned for herself, without interposing other control, he could quench the will to act? Less accurate than usual must the General's observations have been, did he not foresee that Lilius, in particular, was not of a nature to suffer her once-formed purposes to sleep; and stimulated by the obstacle thus unexpectedly interposed, she bent her whole being to the achievement of her object.

Could it then have been matter of surprise, even to Cromwell, who had placed her in a position of familiar intercourse with his daughters, that, armed as she was with a tale of love and sorrow, the young girl contrived deeply to interest her fair companions in the fate of the unfortunate young Cavalier?

One of them, a tender and true-hearted girl, repulsed by her father as sternly as he could repulse *her*, his cherished and favourite child, when she undertook openly to intercede for Lyndesay—this loved daughter, by many believed to have been the confidante of her parent in deeds where the better part of his nature prevailed over the evil, was so little daunted by his hard refusal, that in recounting it to Lilius, she concluded by saying,—

“Be silent henceforth on this topic—silent as the grave; and appoint, if you can, a meeting with some friend of this young Cavalier for the night preceding his trial. It is fixed for Wednesday week. *You heard* my father say that nothing *can* save him, or *shall*—but we will try.”

“And the messenger?” said Lilius. “Can I trust one of your people?”

"Our people? By no means," returned the other, with a haste that showed how such an idea alarmed her. "The service I may render you depends entirely upon our secrecy. Myself once discovered as the agent, all were lost. Neither must you appear in this transaction. On this condition alone I can help you."

"I know one who would bear our message," returned Lilius; continuing, somewhat confusedly, "He plies a boat on the Whitehall pier, and for me he would undertake anything."

The other smiled. "Thou believest him true, and to be trusted?"

"True as thy father's blade; and if there be faith on earth, Walter will not betray us. But how to come to speech with him?"

"For that I will provide. My father tarries at Whitehall for the next few days. We will carry him a message, thou and I; and while I communicate it, thou shalt seek thy waterman, and instruct him in thy mission."

The result of this conversation was the billet which was delivered into Pierre's hands, as our readers may recollect, by a stranger, some time previous to Lyndesay's trial.

In obedience to its mandate the faithful Ninon was found waiting on the night in question, the eve of the day which was to seal our hero's fate, in the dark cloisters of Westminster Abbey. The night was cold and stormy, and the wind howled through the gloomy stone arcades in gusts, driving in torrents of rain at every opening. Not knowing whom or what to expect, but fearing nothing except the failure of her enterprise, Ninon crossed herself; and hurriedly pacing to and fro, regardless of the elements, she seemed like some dark genius of the storm, presiding over his own handiwork.

"Is yonder sibyl she whom we are to meet?" said the younger and more timid of two maidens, who entered at the further end of the cloister, in which there yet remained such a glimmering of light as served to reveal the presence of an object, and yet deepen its mystery. "Already the storm has made me tremble,—but this is too fearful, Lilius. I almost repent me to have come on this errand."

"Art thou thy father's daughter?" responded Lilius, "and speak of fear! Would he not smile, did he hear thee talk of trembling at the

splash of a shower, or the vision of an old woman !”

Lilias spoke to Elizabeth Cromwell, the youngest and best-loved daughter of the future Lord Protector.

“ My father,” returned the maiden, “ looks not for iron nerves in women. But let us hasten the interview, and depart : we may be discovered.”

“ Small fear !” returned her more daring associate ; “ such nights call but few loiterers abroad. Ha—Ninon !”

The old woman, who had not perceived the quiet entrance of the two young girls upon the scene, hastily turned in the direction of the voice.

“ Who calls ?” she uttered low ; “ and what warrant bring you that Ninon should reply ?”

“ My own good visage, dame, which thou hast seen before to-day,” replied Lilias Haman, as, leading her companion and Ninon into a deep recess in the wall, she struck a light, and suffered Ninon to scan her features.

“ And she ?” inquired the old woman, pointing to Cromwell’s fair daughter : “ I know her not.”

“ And yet you might have done. But enough :

she is a friend. Now mark me, mother. The life of Albert Lyndesay rests in your hands. To-morrow his sentence will be death,—sure, certain, execution. My father, on whose testimony, as I know, he is partly to be convicted, will afterwards be appointed his spiritual visitor in the Tower. I will find means to divert his attention for *to-morrow*,—ha! yes,—perhaps for a little longer! But no matter. Take this bundle; it contains the Rev. Shimei Haman's ordinary and well-known dress: wear it in his stead,—exchange,—and Walter, who will await you at Whitehall for your passage to the Tower, will tell you the rest on the way thither."

The old woman shook her head.

"A subtle scheme,—but better ones have failed. He will hardly pass the Tower gates unchallenged."

"I—I will furnish him with a passport," interposed the gentle girl, who had not yet spoken during the interview; "but," she continued, in an agitated voice, "you must both of you first swear a solemn oath."

Ninon regarded her with astonishment. "What can this young damsel have to give in

exchange for an oath!" she said, with a slight accent of contempt.

"Swear never to reveal it," hastily answered Elizabeth Cromwell, "and I will tell you."

"I swear by the Holy Virgin," ejaculated Ninon, as crossing herself she bowed her knees in reverence.

"I swear by—Ha! by what? or whom?" laughed Lilius; "what creed do I believe, that I should swear by it?"

"Surely, Lilius Haman," gravely and meekly returned Cromwell's daughter, "you believe in the God of your father!"

"Then must I swear by the money-bag," returned the other, as a bitter smile passed across her features. "But no—let me consider—Virgin and saint I heed not,—the Highest Name of all is too sacred for one who is about to,"—and her lips quivered for a moment; "nay, this is childish,—away with scruples—I will swear by my own true love."

"Then here is the pass, though thy oath be but a sorry one," returned the other; "but I would fain believe thee better than thy words. This seal, of which I have obtained possession,—

ask me not how,—it is my father's; and there exists not gate or portal in this wide city which the sight of it shall not throw open. But only on this condition do ye bear it in charge. Swear to me that, the prisoner once free, this signet shall never appear. To restore it were to excite suspicion,—it must be destroyed.”

“Generous girl!”—exclaimed Liliās,—“what have you not perilled for us! Yes, I swear—and this time most solemnly, for it is your due—in the name of that Being whom I mean to serve when alas! one more error shall have been added to my many sins—in His name who rules yon firmament I promise that when Master Lyndesay shall be beyond pursuit, that signet seal shall perish.”

As Liliās, carried away by the impulse of the moment, pronounced these words with enthusiastic fervour, she raised her hand and pointed to the scene without, where yet raged the tempest wildly. The gentle daughter of Cromwell stooped, and placed the seal in the hands of Ninon, who had not risen from her knees.

In another instant the two maidens had extinguished their light, and were groping their way

to a retired street at the back of the Abbey, where a vehicle, partaking of the nature both of car and coach, had stood during the last ten minutes.

"Did you find her?" whispered the conductor of the equipage to Lilius.

"All is right, Walter, and she awaits us to-morrow on the Whitehall pier."

The reader knows the sequel.

It may, however, relieve his anxiety to be informed, that, considering the serious nature of the step taken by Elizabeth Cromwell in behalf of her friend, she was treated with singular leniency by her father, when her share in this transaction became known to him. It was a proof of his marvellous love for this young daughter, that he could bear so direct a counter-action of his will on a point on which he had publicly shown himself more than usually stern and unrelenting.

Posterity—removed from that near contact which exaggerates the beauty or deformity of each particular part, and viewing the whole character through the perspective of years—has decided that Oliver Cromwell, though destitute of those

noble impulses of generosity which range high above self-interest, and which, had he possessed them on one occasion, would have stamped him greater than did the attainment of the object for which he stained his future fame, was not inaccessible to sympathy, nor deaf to mercy, nor—save once—insensible to justice. Incapable of magnanimity, he was yet alive to gratitude.

But what had all this time become of the fair young bride, torn from the arms of him for whom she had sacrificed so much, at the moment of their union?

The Lady Katharine's petition for leave to partake Lyndesay's captivity, reached not the hand of General Cromwell, if at all, till long after its despatch; for the petitions of the oppressed, unwelcome as they are assumed to be to the oppressor, find but slow messengers. It needed all our heroine's fortitude, supported by Howard's encouraging counsels, to sustain the weary interval.

The day declined: night came, and no reply. At length, far into midnight, for all answer, there arrived an order that strict restraint

should be laid upon the person of Mistress Wentworth, with a summons for her early attendance next morning before the Privy Council.

Here then was matter for new fears—new apprehensions, amongst which the hope of ever being restored to Albert's presence seemed inevitably to expire.

She thought of the threatening tone of Cromwell's warning, addressed to her at Haman's threshold. She remembered that he had shown no mercy; that when a word from him could have saved, he had forborne to speak that word, and her heart sickened at the dawn of morning.

Yet what had she done? True—she was an adherent of royalty; the wife—yes, the wife of a royalist, and—a condemned man. But were these circumstances to be adduced as crimes? No matter—the tyrants could add but little now to her cup of woe.

At the appointed hour she was carried to Whitehall in a sedan, strictly guarded, and alone; for such were the orders. Trembling in every limb, yet forcing herself to assume a calmness which the proud blood coursing in her veins dictated to her as becoming her father's daughter

before his base-born judges, the Lady Katharine, after being detained a short space in the ante-chamber, whilst other examinations were pending, was marshalled into the presence of the Board, self-constituted a Privy Council.

A harsh voice, that of Ireton, commanded her to raise her vizard; and when she did so, not all the anomalies presented by the scene before her seemed to startle her, as did her own aspect, for the first few moments, strike the party amongst whom she was introduced.

The chiefs of the ruling faction were all there; men, for the most part, of hard features, and stiff, unyielding manners. There were countenances which bore the stamp of intellect and deep reflection; of daring and of suffering;—others in which bigotry and narrow-mindedness had drawn their indelible lines; or where selfishness had contracted the lineaments, or vulgarity usurped the place of all other indications. But in one and all was wanting that air of princely majesty and noble dignity of bearing, which had distinguished those whom Katharine had last beheld within that chamber. The aristocratic brow; the high-bred contour of countenance; the firmly-knit

limbs and manly forms which generally marked the best blood of England at the period when Vandyck's pencil limned for other ages the models whereby we judge of them—where were they now? Where was the graceful speech, the courteous greeting, the easy step of those whom birth and nature had designed to walk the halls of princes?

In their stead reigned the rude license of manner which marks the attempts of the vulgar to emancipate themselves from form; the yet more awkward punctilio which some endeavoured to substitute for it; the wearisome solemnity of visage, so palpably worn for the occasion, which supplied the place of the easy deferential gravity of the Court; the shuffling gait, the bustling and business-like carriage, and the occasional buffoonery, which pervaded the awkward attempts of the majority of the regicide Council to prove the fitness of the "call," which had rendered them occupants of the Palace of Whitehall.

Such was the nature of the scene on which the eyes of Katharine rested when first she raised her vizard. But in a moment she turned away her glance, something insulted and perhaps humbled

by the eager and unsparing gaze with which all eyes were turned upon her. She was not aware of the effect which the presence of feminine grace and dignity produced upon men not so far removed from the amenities of life as to be insensible to their influence, and abashed under their sway. But, attributing the unmannerly stare and sullen silence which greeted her entrance to a far different motive, our heroine turned to seek other objects of contemplation.

As she did so, her eyes lighted upon two individuals, stationed not far from herself, at the same end of the chamber, whose presence in a moment quickened all her sympathies. These were the two unhappy children of the late King, the Princess Elizabeth and the young Duke of Gloucester; whom no efforts of their friends had been able to rescue from the hands of the Parliament.

The royal maiden, youthful in the extreme, was nevertheless gifted with that precocity of mind and heart which so fatally tell of an early grave. Her cheek was wan and sunken, and its ghastly hue was heightened by the unearthly lustre of her eye, which ever and anon seemed fixed as in the contemplation of scenes beyond mortality

and by the gloss of her dark ringlets, which, in disregard of prevailing modes, and absence of her accustomed tire-woman, she had suffered to wander, as was natural to them, down her face and neck. Her whole figure, in the deepest degree interesting, bore but the traces of beauty, across which the blast of suffering seemed to have swept with blighting touch.

Unable to support herself, she had been accommodated with a chair, in which, as her drooping figure half sat, half reclined, the attitude, and the deep mourning of her dress, with the marble hue of her complexion, gave to her whole form an appearance almost monumental.

By her side, presenting a remarkable contrast to the lovely mourner, stood her young brother, the bold little Prince Henry. With hands firmly fixed upon his hips, and cap carefully replaced upon his head, from which it had been removed on his entrance, the stalwart little fellow stood erect, one foot in advance, and his very look spoke defiance.

Katharine in an instant read the scene; and the next she was kneeling at the Princess Elizabeth's feet, and covering her hand with tears and kisses.

The broken-hearted girl raised her head, and when she encountered the well-known features before her, the spell burst, and she threw herself, weeping bitterly, into the arms of Katharine.

"Villains—knaves!" exclaimed the little Duke of Gloucester, "you have insulted my sister, and you shall answer for it with your heads."

"Hold thy peace, young malapert," said Ireton. "Methinks a leather strap across thy shoulders will teach thee better manners."

"And I warrant thee thy master shall be well provided with them," added Bradshaw; "for the godly Council propose binding thee to Giles Jeffries, the tanner."

"Even as we would appoint that peevish maiden to a calling whereby she may gain an honest livelihood, and shame her indolent, carnal ancestors," said Fleetwood. "But up, Mistress: no popish idolatries here: no worshipping of Baal! up—I say—and bend not the knee before the creature."

Thus apostrophised, the Lady Katharine gently disengaged herself from the embrace of the young Princess, and, rising, took her station behind the royal mourner's chair.

"Hard-hearted men!" exclaimed she, facing the Council with a gaze from which indignation had banished all reserve. "Oh! God! can it be that you, that any among you, are fathers!"

She fixed her eye on Cromwell as she spoke, since his was the only face she recognized in all the motley assemblage. Instinctively towards him also many other glances turned, as expecting that from the master-mind alone the utterer of such an appeal should receive confusion.

But Katharine had touched the one vulnerable point. Unconsciously, indeed, she had struck a chord which vibrated through the heartstrings of the man of iron, and in an instant his eyes were filled with tears.

"Take the Stuart maiden from the presence," he said, hastily, "and bid my Lady Fairfax keep her in charge. Companions, we lose time in hearkening to children's wailings. Away with thee also, young hero. And now, Mistress Katharine Wentworth: it needeth not, I opine, that we inform thee wherefore thou art summoned here?"

"Truly, after what I have seen, I would say, General Cromwell, for no purpose in which truth

or mercy can bear a share. Alas! at this tribunal to be innocent is to stand condemned."

Cromwell's brow contracted, but he spoke not. But Bradshaw, casting a look of peculiar meaning at the Lady Katharine, said, sarcastically,—

"Forsooth, Mistress Innocence, a becoming gibe for one who was shameless enough to be found companion of yon traitor even in prison—to make to righteous and God-fearing men."

Indignation and wounded pride brought the blushes to our heroine's cheeks as she answered,

"He whom ye falsely call traitor—whose blood even now ye thirst for—he is my husband, and I but urged a wife's claim to share his captivity."

All present turned towards her with surprise; and Cromwell also started, or affected to start;—then added, as if incredulously,

"A marvellous tale, young damsel. Look thou impose not on us; for altogether strange as we be to thy affairs, yet know we well that this Lyndesay had ne'er a wife but two days since."

"Your memory is short, General Cromwell," returned Katharine, haughtily: "yet perchance a scene may not altogether have escaped your recollection in which my—husband received this

ring from the suicide Dominican in your presence. With this he wedded me but yesterday."

Cromwell looked coldly on the ring which Katharine held towards him; and not the most penetrating observer could have detected whether the sight of it carried conviction, or whether indeed he had ever doubted. But carefully avoiding all acknowledgment of any former intercourse, he said, severely,—

"And this alleged marriage, then, was to amuse the Government whilst thy sweetheart escaped?"

"Escaped!" echoed Katharine. "What say you? Repeat it. Oh! if it were possible!"

"Indifferently well acted," interposed Fleetwood.

"Pray, mistress, were you a masquer at the late man's revels?"

"Dissemble not, maiden," said Cromwell, sternly, "nor presume to provoke the Lord and us by feigning that thou wert ignorant of Albert Lyndesay's flight from the Tower yesternight, and escape beyond the seas."

"Now God be praised!" exclaimed Katharine, fervidly, clasping her hands together, while her

upturned eyes ran over with emotion.—“ But, by the gratitude I owe Him for this most signal mercy, I swear that I heard nought of such an attempt even until now.”

The future Lord Protector eyed her again with one of those glances in which scrutiny defies scrutiny; then, handing another ring to her, he said, in a dubious tone,—

“ Perchance thou art ignorant too of any passages in which *this* bauble was to be thy passport. Methinks thou art somewhat ready at opening prison doors, relying on a key of gold or of beauty ;—I wot not which.”

It was the Earl of Strafford’s signet ring, which Katharine had placed in Colonel Tomlinson’s hands, on the eve of the King’s execution.

Stung to the quick by the seemingly slighting tone of the last words, Katharine replied, as the proud blood mounted to her brow,—

“ Be the shame and dishonour on those who would use that precious relic of a father’s trust to compass a daughter’s injury ! Through that ring, originally presented by our late sovereign to his minister, I would have gained access to that monarch’s presence in his hour of extremity,

Colonel Tomlinson undertook to convey it to the King; wherefore he handed it over to his murderers, I know not."

Again Cromwell frowned heavily, and amongst the other members of the Council there were expressions of impatience and indignation. "She hath wrought her own destruction," said one; "her very words condemn her, and are a manifest sign from the Lord," said another.

"And your purpose, woman, had you gained access to the man, Charles Stuart?" asked Cromwell.

"Had I gained it! Spite of thy ungenerous taunt, Oliver Cromwell, thou knowest not then the half of my success in opening prison doors. Trusting neither to gold nor,—nor to beauty, if thou wilt have it so,—but only to the Lord God of my fathers, I mounted the private staircase on that evening, with intent to aid the King's escape, and carrying with me a disguise for that purpose. God overruled the design; but I arrived in his presence, sirs, just in time to hear him offer up a prayer for the pardon of his murderers."

A short pause ensued, for her words made some impression; but it was broken by the entrance of

a messenger from the Tower, who informed the Council that the female who had been left in the cell in place of the malignant, Lyndesay, had also mysteriously disappeared; and that, as the place was strictly guarded, the impression had become universal that she was a witch, and had escaped in the form of a hideous dwarf, who, by orders from some unknown quarter, probably produced also by sorcery, had gained admittance to the cell. Both woman and dwarf had, however, entirely vanished, and no trace of them could be discovered.

The slightest possible smile curled Cromwell's lip at this information; but he sighed audibly, and, glancing round, ejaculated,—

“The Lord in his mercy guide us, for truly these are troublous and awful times.”

The sentiment met with a devout assent from all; and, after a few moments of seeming prayer, Harrison took up the subject.

“Verily this matter is of deep import, and, to my mind, requireth careful weighing and grave counsel. What if all these should be in league with the Evil One to deceive us! Yea, if the witch should have assumed the pleasant carnal form and favour of this damsel here present, thus

with fleshly charms to beguile the righteous and God-loving from the judgment due to her sorceries and foul deceits."

This new idea found almost universal favour with those present, on whom the first view of Katharine's beauty had acted like a spell. Glad to find so plausible a solution of a phenomenon which would otherwise have redounded little to their dignity, they joyfully adopted the suggestion, and, with nearly unanimous voice demanded that the heroic young girl who had so fearlessly denounced their crime should be compelled to submit to the trial of witchcraft.

Unable to credit the real belief of any one present in such a charge, Katharine attempted not to defend herself; but stood back, her arms folded on her bosom, and her whole expression denoting a quiet security which added weight to the pretended ground for the absurd accusation as implying a consciousness of supernatural power. But the uproar increased almost to frenzy; and Katharine perceived at length, with some uneasiness, that the eye of Oliver Cromwell wavered from its accustomed imperturbability, and assumed a strangely uncertain expres-

sion. He had not offered a word on this unexpected turn, but had remained in gloomy silence during the burst of mad fanaticism which had seized upon his accomplices.

Not knowing how to construe the General's conduct, Katharine for the first time began to regard as serious the turn which the examination had taken; when at that moment the door behind the prisoner, which gave entrance from without, was again opened; and Oliver Cromwell, starting up, as if once more breathing, broke silence.

"Ha—George—is it thou? and in good time i' faith. Nay—bring thy wits here, man, and aid us to judge the devil and all his works. Would'st think yon comely damsel was a child of the Evil One? a daughter of Satan? Yet so these pious men declare."

Katharine turned and beheld the new comer. In his broad and manly figure she immediately recognised the person of the officer, who, during her detention in the Tower, had shown her so much regard. His honest face, at first covered with an expression of perplexity, on the explanatory speech of Cromwell, crimsoned over with anger.

"Daughter of Satan! Nay, man, else would

she receive fairer entertainment amongst her brethren than seems offered here," muttered the blunt soldier, as, advancing to the table, he turned and looked on Katharine. "For shame! rulers of England, that would persecute a helpless woman! and that woman Strafford's daughter! Fear not, damsel—nay, I need not say that to one of thy race—but heed not the clamour of these mackaws. And you, ye canting drivellers, thank the Lord—and if ye know how, thank him sincerely for once, that he hath deigned to preserve one hard head in England unturned by your gibberish and foolery. Hark ye, friend——"

And the officer proceeded to whisper a few words in Oliver Cromwell's ear, which drew from him a deep groan, with an expression of countenance indicative of humble, though reluctant, submission; a demonstration which, for once, the General suffered to appear in full force. Pointing towards Ireton and Harrison, he only said to the officer,—

"Deliver thy message to them, also, friend;—for without doubt it is from the Lord."

"Then wilt thou be the better spokesman, General, as being more used to the Lord's

errands,—an thou speak truth. Meanwhile, I have other fish to fry.”

The officer advanced towards Katharine, and without hesitation offered her his arm. She took it immediately, marvelling as to what was to come next. But the Council, seized with wonder and curiosity, and mystified by the manner which their unfathomable leader had thought fit to assume, remained stilled and silent.

Katharine’s protector led her from the chamber; traversed without inquiry or obstacle the various corridors and apartments through which they had to pass; and soon placed himself and her beyond the gates of Whitehall. Almost bewildered herself, she addressed not a word to him, but suffered him to lead her on until they came to the water-side.

There was a boat in waiting, and as he placed her in it, the Lady Katharine perceived that he was not preparing to accompany her. She hastily roused herself, and stammered out thanks.

“But do I leave you here, to whom I owe so much?” she added, timidly.

The manly face of the soldier was covered with a blush like that of a girl, as he replied,—

“Your presence once was dangerous to my peace—(’Sdeath! if the Council knew that, would they not swear you had bewitched me!) No matter: it might be so again: we both have other duties.—A vessel sails tomorrow for Bordeaux—in it you will meet protectors, and for the next twenty-four hours you will lie concealed. In happier times we may meet again. Farewell.”

When Katharine returned to England at the Restoration, she recognised her gallant preserver in the Duke of Albemarle.

CHAPTER XIII.

Lost to the world by lot severe,
Oh what a gem lies buried here !
Nipped by misfortune's cruel frost,
The buds of fair affection lost !

THE small but highly decorated Church of St. Germain des Près, in Paris, was lighted as for a fête, and profusely hung with garlands and festoons of flowers. The inhabitants of the extensive Fauxbourg thronged to the quarter, and soon the church itself and the chapel of the neighbouring convent were crowded to repletion ; for the Holy Apostolic Church was about to present one of her most imposing spectacles ; and the Royalties of France and England had announced their intention to grace with their presence the profession of a nun.

Rumour assigned as a reason for the extraordinary preparations which were made on this

occasion, the immense possessions of the neophyte, which rendered her devotion of her person and estate to the service of the cloister a signal triumph to the Church, and one, at which—to credit the busy tongue of common report—that ambitious body had long been aiming.

It had been announced that, subsequently to the ceremony of profession in the convent chapel, the Royal retinue would attend the celebration of mass in the adjoining church, accompanied by the newly-professed, who was permitted, as is customary, to use this, her last day of liberty, without restraint.

Impelled, perhaps, by the curiosity which influenced so many, or desirous to ascertain its object, a young man, apparently a stranger, entered the convent walls, and gazed around him for some time inquiringly. Amidst the vast concourse his appearance attracted no notice, save, occasionally from the approving glance of a Parisian dame, to whose favour his fine dark eye, and distinguished figure, formed a passport. After a short period of seeming deliberation, he advanced towards an aged man in the priestly dress, who was loitering near to the convent gates, and

inquired the meaning of all this stir and preparation.

The old Priest, bowed with infirmities, raised his dull eyes towards the young man's face, and answered him in a voice to which the feebleness of childhood had returned, without, however, its mirthful music; for his tone was peevish and harsh.

"Why ask *me* more than another? Was it *my* fault if the holy church was duped of the mother, and will take the daughter instead? She will pay herself richly for the fraud, I warrant."

"Do you mean, then," said the young man, "that some poor girl is about to take the veil?"

"*Poor* girl!" returned the other, pettishly; "call you her poor?—the heiress of the broadest acres in France!"

"Who, then, in Heaven's name, is she?" exclaimed the young man, impatiently.

"She *was* Marguerite Hamilton d'Amville."

"My God!" exclaimed the other, with sudden emotion; and clasping his hand upon his brow, he stood for a few moments to recover the shock; then slowly ejaculated, "Poor Margaret!"

The old Priest had marked with a malicious

chuckle the increasing excitement of his auditor's manner as he had trifled with his inquiries; but he was altogether unprepared for the effect which the final intelligence was to produce upon him. His old eyes almost sparkled with delight as he gloated upon the sight of the misery which he had inflicted.

"You loved her, then?" he said, at length.

"As brother would love sister," bitterly responded the other.

"Aye, as brother would love sister, Albert Lyndesay," repeated a voice from the crowd.

Surprised, the young man turned, but amidst the moving mass he was unable to distinguish the speaker. A thought, however, struck him, and darting towards the portal of the chapel, he exclaimed—

"It may yet not be too late to save her!"

"Too late," echoed the same voice, and Albert would have sworn it to be Ninon's; but that with the impression came the sad recollection that she was immured in his stead, a prisoner, in the Tower of London.

With a deep sigh he hurried on, and after some difficulty found himself, he knew not how, in the

centre of a group of gentlemen, chiefly, as their appearance denoted, attendants of the Court, who had obtained admission to a cloistered gallery, which commanded a view of the ceremony. One of their number attracted Lyndesay's attention on his first glance around, and subsequently.

He stood apart from the rest, apparently not of their company; his arms folded on his chest, and his figure reclining against one of the shafted pillars. In breathless silence he watched the scene below; and his eyes were never withdrawn from it, excepting once, when he fixed them with a long, sad gaze, on Lyndesay's face. Though he wore a disguise, being wrapped in a large Spanish cloak, with the hat and plume, and had adopted a closely-fitting black silk vizard, the eyes of zealous friendship were not slow in discerning through the covering the noble form and dignified mien of the Marquis of Montrose.

Concluding that his chief had reasons for concealment, our hero attempted not to claim a recognition; but with feelings yet more excited by the incident, he hastily turned to the contemplation of the scene which was at that moment proceeding in the body of the chapel.

There, on the steps of the high altar, knelt Marguerite d'Amville; her head bowed low, and her pale cheek scarcely distinguishable from the snowy veil which flowed around her figure. Her beautiful black tresses had been severed, and lay upon the altar; where also were placed the rich jewels with which she had been adorned on the morning of this her day of immolation. One only, at her special entreaty, she had been permitted to retain: it clasped her close-fitting grey vest at the throat; and as Lyndesay looked at it, a strange tremor thrilled through his heart. He had, indeed, come *too late*.

The Cardinal Mazarin, the highest church dignitary present, stood in front of the altar, supported on either side by gorgeously-robed priests and mitred abbots. He had raised his pontifical hands, and pronounced the solemn benediction over the head of the newly-received sister; and the nun, after a pause, had risen and proceeded to the spot where sat the Abbess of her order, to receive a second blessing, ere Albert Lyndesay had sufficiently awakened from the state of stupor into which the scene had thrown him, to raise his eyes from the spot where first he had beheld her kneeling figure.

He was at length roused by the strains of the "Gloria in excelsis," which pealed at once from hundreds of hidden lips; and looking round, he observed that the part of the chapel allotted to the ceremony was surrounded by a screen, which effectually concealed, save through occasional apertures, the spectators who were present at it; while the sisters themselves, closely veiled, occupied a latticed gallery at the western extremity of the building, and heightened the effect of each portion of the ceremony by the rich harmony of their well-tuned voices.

It was during the concluding chant—the "Benedictus"—that Lyndesay, recollecting himself, turned anxiously towards the spot where stood his heroic leader. Their eyes met, and the seeming stranger, raising his hand, made a sign to Albert to follow him, and immediately quitted the gallery.

They descended; and the gallant Scot, led the way, silently through chapter-house and cloister, until they came to a low door which communicated with the neighbouring church. Here they entered; and proceeding as if for our Lady's Chapel at the back of the choir, they

stopped something short of this, opposite to a small and unfrequented chapel to the right.

Before its entrance were hung dark curtains, veiling its very existence there to all who were not initiated in the secrets of the Church: and to such of the throng as were induced to make inquiry, answer was made, that the use of the chapel had been granted for the performance of a severe penance. In fact, such cases were common, and few cared to inquire.

There were, however, eyes among the crowd, that watched the two foreigners as they advanced towards the gate of the chapel; and, entering it, disappeared beneath the waving drapery.

It was lighted within, though not with the glare of the rest of the Church, and one individual was seated there alone. At sight of him, with a common impulse, Montrose and Albert Lyndesay each flung his cap upon the pavement, and, with bended knee, did homage to the Majesty of England.

“Rise, Marquis of Montrose,—de Retz hath failed us, or hath encountered some delay. Nay, gallant champion of our crown,—but that we know thou weepest only blood, we could believe

our hand was moist with tears. And thou also," said Charles, turning to Lyndesay, "in good time hath fate brought thee hither. Do thou also arise, Lord Marquis of Gordon."

The calm self-possession with which the youthful Monarch pronounced these words, hailing him as if expected, produced on Lyndesay the impression that Charles mistook him for another. He hesitated, and turned a doubting look towards Montrose; but could read nothing in the countenance of the Marquis save astonishment equal to his own. The young King saw the glance, and answered it.

"Nay, brave Lyndesay,—for an thou wilt answer to no other name, we must e'en greet thee by thine old familiar one;—this gallant chief cannot enlighten thee. He came here tonight in secret to talk of troops and battles,—to counsel his sovereign upon the recovery of a throne. Unwittingly he has, as we much fear, fallen upon an evil hour for his peace. Let us afford to him, as well as to ourself, some solace in awarding the recompense of a noble and loyal friend."

"My Liege, I understand you not," said Montrose, as with arms firmly folded together, and a

brow on which the traces of the deep internal struggle of contending feelings were still visible, he stood before the Monarch. "Myself but just arrived from the Hague, I know nought of the proceedings of this Court, neither can comprehend, alas! how any of your Majesty's friends can at present meet guerdon or recompense, save from God and their conscience."

"And against all chance of reward from the latter source, my Lord Marquis, we must beg to place our protest; for beshrew us, if we think our friends for the most part have a conscience. Nay, fear no indiscretion, noble Marquis: we reserve this piece of information for thy faithful ear alone. But now to the point. Do thou, Montrose, read aloud these papers, in order as we shall present them to thee; and judge whether these evil times have not at least wrought marvels for thy brave aide-de-camp."

Charles, as he spoke, produced a roll of papers, which Albert immediately recognised as the packet committed to Katharine's charge by the late King. The presumptive proof which the delivery of these papers afforded of the Lady Katharine's escape and safety, entirely outweighed

every other consideration for the moment ; and he was about to venture a question, when the King motioned silence, and handed to Montrose the outer envelope, engrossed in the handwriting of his Royal father. The lips of the Scottish hero quivered with emotion as he regarded the well known characters. He read,—

“ Attestations of the birth and lineage of the young Marquis of Gordon, known as Albert Lyndesay. To be opened in presence of our successor. Written with our royal hand ; and sealed with our seal in this, the 23rd year of our reign.”

The first paper which met the hand of Montrose, was of the date of the wild and romantic excursion of the Prince of Wales and Buckingham, by way of Paris to Madrid. It ran as follows.

“ This act is to certify, that on the 12th day of September, in the year of grace 1623, a marriage was formally solemnized in the Church of St. Germain des Près, at the hour of midnight, before the small altar of St. Eustace, between Albert Gordon, Earl of Glenboyne, eldest son of the noble the Marquis of Gordon, and Isabelle Claude Marguerite d’Amville, sister to the

last Duc d'Amville, and co-heiress of his lands and possessions.

“ And in consideration of the danger which the report of such marriage would bring upon the contracting parties, the lady having on the said night fled the cloister, wherein on the morrow she was to have professed; as well as the prejudice and injury which such proceeding might bring upon the affairs of the High and Mighty Prince Charles of England, in case of the cognizance of the French Court, that a British subject, one of his Royal Highness's suite, had so far contravened the policy of the Minister as to contract an alliance with an heiress of the house of d'Amville; —in consideration of these weighty reasons, the undersigned, being the parties contracting and witnessing the marriage, bind themselves by a solemn oath, never by sign, word, or deed, to reveal the transaction which brought them on this said night, into the Church of St. Germain des Près, during the natural life of his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, in whose august presence such compact was ratified.

“ By our hopes of mercy here and hereafter, we, the undersigned, have sworn to guard this

secret ; in witness whereof we set to our hands."

The signatures followed in order of rank, comprehending every individual present at the solemnity excepting the boy Jacques.

"CHARLES STUART, Prince of Wales.

GEORGE VILLIERS, Duke of Buckingham.

ALBERT GORDON, Earl of Glenboyne.

ISABELLE MARGUERITE CLAUDE D'AMVILLE.

BARTOLEMEO RIENZI.

NINON LAVALETTE."

On the back of the deed was written in the King's own hand, with a date one year subsequent to the former,—

"May God forgive us this, which may not now be undone. Oh! why did we suffer our passion for Henrietta Marie, our devotion to the thoughtless romance of Buckingham, to blind us to the consequences of a marriage waiting our own decease to be acknowledged. But the precaution hath failed; and the traitor is doubtless the officiating priest. This day we have received intelligence that Glenboyne, who tarried from the time of his marriage in Paris, awaiting the birth of his heir, has been cruelly murdered during the carnival; and, as is thought, by emissaries of the

Church. But little can be ascertained, as the only witness is his servant, a soldier of the Scottish guard, married to the Countess's attendant, who immediately afterwards died of the wounds he also had received. This man's testimony only went to prove that his master was attacked opposite to the old Palais des Thermes.

"The Countess, but few days previous delivered of a son, was conveyed by Ninon, on this catastrophe, to a place which it was hoped the malice of her enemies might fail to discover. But for the child's life they thirst the most. To save the infant Earl the heroic woman Ninon has placed her own child in the hands of these bloodhounds, and hopes thus to have eluded the search. Great God of Heaven! can this be the work of thy consecrated ministers!"—

At this crisis a deep groan was heard from the outer side of the railing which bounded the entrance to the chapel. All started; but the moments were too precious to be lost, and the eager interest of the whole party was on the rack. Montrose concluded the paper.—

"They have escaped,—God be praised! And it was Richelieu, then, who dealt the blow! On

account of his claim to the D'Amville title the young heir was doomed; since a *son*, born in France, alone could inherit it. And for our oath's sake, we are bound to forbear demanding justice on this cruel and crafty churchman!"

The next document was dated several years later, and spoke of Ninon's escape to Scotland with the young heir; of Albert's nurture by his grandfather, the Marquis of Gordon; of the marriage of his mother the widowed Comtesse d'Amville with the brother of the Duke of Hamilton, her previous rejection of the Duke himself, and the birth of her daughter.

On the same paper was written, apparently at a subsequent period,—

"The Countess is again a widow; her husband, alas! having fallen in this unhappy expedition (to the Island of Rhé.) The young mother and her child have taken refuge in France from family troubles; and she may now without danger claim her inheritance; since the fact of her child's being a daughter, born in England, disarms the fears of the Government touching the title."

The fourth and last document was written with

less care, and long intervening spaces of time. The style was hurried, and the hasty insertions appeared to have been made by snatches. The first was dated "York." It alluded with much emotion and self-reproach to Charles's first interview with Lyndesay at that place, and to the service of our hero under Montrose.

Another paper, dated "Oxford," concluded thus:

"This night we have beheld the brother and sister side by side, and one single word would have opened both to Albert and to Marguerite untold depths of joy. Suppose—but no—the *love* of those young hearts is, if we mistake not, already given, and nature alone asserted her sway in bringing them together.

"My son—Alas! we are again"

Here Montrose suddenly paused, and glanced at the young King. Charles, nothing disconcerted, appeared to enjoy his hesitation; and, with a glance inexpressibly comic towards our hero, he said,—

"Proceed, my Lord, we entreat you. Losers in a game may easily be pardoned their endeavours; and you and we have, on that score, the right to draw largely on the indulgence of our

friends. The tide sets to-day entirely in one direction; and the peerless Lady Katharine, no less than the devoted Marguerite, together with two illustrious titles, and millions of livres of inheritance, are found, either by birth, marriage, descent, or alliance, to devolve entirely to the possession and charge of this young gentleman."

"Her brother!" ejaculated Montrose, in whom the King's thoughtless allusion had stirred a train of painful reminiscences. Lyndesay grasped his hand, but neither spoke.

The King perceived the effect of his light jest, and, with his natural tact, immediately took up the last paper, and, calling the attention of his followers, proceeded himself to read the conclusion.

"These notes we have from time to time recorded as circumstances have developed the fate of the principal personages concerned. Our own will soon come to a close. But since these documents have been much curtailed by the unhappy pressure of public affairs; and our prerogative is powerless now to uphold the noble young Marquis of Gordon under his unjust destiny, by the sunshine of Court favour, there

remains but one care on his account—to ensure that these papers be safely transmitted to our son and successor, whom we charge by the duty and love he bears to us, to render justice to all parties therein concerned.

“The young Marquis and his sister each holds in possession a jewel composed of brilliants—that of Albert bearing the device of a rose encircling the C. in enamel; the other, in the hands of Marguerite, bearing the fleur-de-lis in diamonds, with the initials P. W. These two, when united, form a clasp on which the rose and fleur-de-lis meet in a wreath; and this clasp we ourself presented on the night of that ill-omened marriage to the bride, Isabelle d’Amville. These, when produced——”

On a sudden the King stopped, and, turning towards Albert, requested, with much apparent courtesy, a sight of the jewel in question.

Had our hero noted the malicious smile which played around the Monarch’s lips as he uttered this request, he would have been spared more than half the confusion with which he stammered out a reply.

“My Liege—that gem now adorns the hand of

the Lady Katharine. Need I tell your Majesty the tale? Alas! since the hour when I placed it there, and she became the wife of a condemned traitor, I have never again beheld her."

The young Marquis coloured deeply as he spoke; for the remembrance of former passages concerning Katharine, in which the Prince had borne a part, had not faded from his memory.

The good-natured Monarch was the first to relieve him.

"Nay—prithee, man, be patient. Here are we toiling through this long story to give thee a marquisate, and an estate which would make most men look gay; and by thy woful visage we might be offering thee so much dust. Faith—we ourself are not absolutely dead to the charms of the ladies, and thy fair mistress in particular hath reigned our goddess for a day—nay, fear not, we have found others since as fair.—But, we were about to add, that were thy case our own, not even the information that the lady in question had herself placed these papers in her sovereign's hands, and, with all due decorum, had assisted in his first perusal of them, would withdraw our interest for a moment from their contents."

The Marquis of Gordon threw himself on his knees, and pressed the Monarch's hand to his lips.

"She is safe, then—Heaven be praised! And my humblest thanks I offer to your Majesty."

The King repeated his joyous exclamation, word for word; then added,—

"Nay, man, for her safety, methinks small thanks are due to us; and when England shall be our own again, though a wife be in the bargain, we shall thank Heaven rather for the kingdom than the consort. But—odds fish! what comes here?"

"A witness, if one be needed, to the facts contained in yonder papers," returned a female, who, unobserved by any one present, had glided under the drapery which curtained the entrance to the chapel. "Here stands the nurse of Albert Gordon—there, the murderer of his father."

She pointed, as she spoke, to a man reclining against the columns of a tomb in the chapel, and the eyes of all present fixed upon the livid features of Bartolemeo, the priest whom Albert had encountered in the court of the convent.

Impelled as by a charm, through the strong

power which the aspect and voice of Ninon gave her over one who lived in almost supernatural horror of aught that reminded him of his early crime, the Priest had followed at her beckoning; and silently passing into the chapel under her guidance, the disclosures he had overheard had achieved the overthrow of what little strength of body or mind age and remorse had left him. His lips were white, and his complexion, as he repeated idiotically after Ninon, the thrilling words—"the murderer of his father."

Suddenly, a new impulse seized him, and grasping a cord which hung from his throat, he drew from the folds of his cassock a small paper, which was fastened to it. The scrap appeared much worn, and it was with difficulty that the old man, in carefully unfolding it, with the caution evidently of habit, could preserve it from falling to pieces.

But, unmindful of all around, he perused and reperused it aloud, with the calmness of idiotcy. The document contained an order for the destruction of Albert, Earl of Glenboyne, and his infant son. There was no name appended, but the incoherent wanderings of the maniac supplied the deficiency.

“ Seek him in the Seine: he lies there still—go, Lady Isabelle, and carry to him his infant heir;—for Richelieu says he too must lie in the deep cold waters. Was it my fault, Lady, if thou didst bribe me to bind thee and yonder Earl together? Is it my fault, that I must die for it, except I do this deed? See, the nun hath steeped her veil in his blood! And the boy! I did not shed his—oh no! could I but behold him!—yet he hath no tongue to say I saved him——”

At this instant the unnatural form of Pierre appeared, in obedience to a summons from Ninon, and Bartolemeo, gazing on him for a few moments with a fixed and glassy eye, uttered a piercing shriek, and casting on the pavement the paper he had treasured through a life as the apology for his crime, he darted with the fleetness of lunacy from the presence. The next morning his body was found floating on the waters of the Seine.

Ninon wildly grasped the hand of Pierre, and for a moment, hung upon his neck.

“ My child! my son!” she said. “ Forgive, my Liege—forgive, my Lords, the weakness of a mother—the first—the last. Albert, Marquis of Gordon, thou art reinstated in thy rights; and

now the parent's heart yearns once more towards her own offspring. For thee I rendered up this boy to cruelty, and, as I believed, to death; but he was carried to Ireland, became a mendicant, and in that character gained Sir Thomas Wentworth's notice when Viceroy. The plot answered; for Richelieu instigated the vile Dominican to hunt this poor boy down. Soon, however, the keen wit of Jacopo found the right scent, and—treacherous alike to Richelieu and Hamilton—he held the secret of thy birth from all, save the King of England and Ninon Lavalette. To save thee from this man's treacheries; to watch over thee, Albert; to guard thee alike from Priest and Puritan; from fanatic and Dominican—I have been a vagrant on the face of the earth.”

“Henceforth, good mother, my roof shall be thine,” said the young Cavalier. “And, wherever my lot be cast, thou and Pierre shall share it.”

“Peace, again, foolish boy. Thou mayest protect my son!—but for me—my destiny is accomplished. I have a vow—and henceforth I know no service save that of the Queen of Heaven. Now kneel, and then, farewell!”

Instinctively the young man obeyed ; and with an energy which passed for inspiration, Ninon pronounced over his head a solemn and affecting benediction. Then, without trusting her voice for another farewell, she abruptly left the chapel.

Albert stood petrified for a few moments. Then turning to Pierre, he said hastily :

“And thy master, my poor fellow—for thou wert in Howard’s service?”

The dwarf made a sign, indicating that all was well, and pointing to the exit, beckoned to the young Cavalier, as if inviting him to follow where he might meet his friends. The Marquis turned a look of appeal towards the King.

Charles, who had been watching the scene with considerable interest and curiosity, rose from his seat as our hero turned to him.

“One moment more, and thou shall seek thy bride. Egad ! but the state affairs of the Queen of Heaven seem fairly to have beaten out of the field the humble concerns of the King of England. No matter. We wish her Celestial Majesty joy of her new maid of honour, and trust the acquisition may console her for the loss of sundry magnificent revenues of the house of D’Amville, which

her Majesty's ministers deemed this day's ceremony had placed within their clutch. But, a truce to jesting. Our game is all too grave a one; for the stake is a crown, and the throws have so far been against us. What news, brave Marquis, from the Hague?"

"The Government can promise us little aid," returned Montrose—"and the nobles, your Majesty's subjects, are weak through faction. Unable to establish a coalition, I am ready to dare all alone; and I ask but your Majesty's authority, to throw myself once more upon the breach which I shall quit but with my life."

The Marquis spoke somewhat sadly, and Charles immediately took the word in a lighter tone.

"Gallant soldier! true friend!" he said, "Oh, for a few more faithful spirits like thine, whom love and loyalty might instigate to actions which selfish and calculating policy knows not how to achieve! In such would be our best augury of success; and thy undaunted spirit, Montrose, is the happiest omen which hath yet lighted the fortunes of Charles the Second. We constitute thee our representative, as Lieutenant of Scot-

land and the North; to act as thy judgment and courage shall dictate, in the region which already rings with the echo of thy bold deeds. France—or, at least, Mazarin—will not, or cannot, move in our behalf: De Retz, who was to have been of our councils tonight, but hath doubtless met some obstacle, is friendly; and time may turn the scale of power into his hands. Our sister, at the Hague, hath our cause at heart; but, for instant action, we look to Scotland and to thee. Brave noble, we waste no idle words on a theme which we have, as we fear, already touched too rudely; but we point thee to glory in the stead of love; and whether thou win back our throne, or perish in the attempt, we venture to predict that the page of Scotland's story in ages yet to come, shall find its brightest boast in the name of Montrose!"

"My Liege," replied the Marquis, deeply affected, "I never had passion on earth so strong as that to do the King, your father, service."*

* This expression was used by Montrose, in a letter of the period, addressed to Charles II.

CHAPTER XIV.

Why then a final note prolong,
Or lengthen out a closing song?

SCOTT.

THE last tones of the pealing organ had died away: the Cardinal Archbishop had concluded his oration, and had descended from the massive *chaire*, whence he had addressed to the newly professed sister, and the whole order, a highly-wrought harangue upon the beatitude of the espousals that day celebrated, as well as on the glory of that vocation, which rendered them the handmaids of a Church sitting triumphant above the kings of the earth. And on that day, indeed, the Roman Catholic Church had good cause to triumph, for no small wealth had been poured into her coffers). Yet, the illustrious individuals who had formed the conspicuous portion of the

proud Prelate's audience, showed no signs of a preparation to depart.

There, on the side of the nave fronting the pulpit, under a canopy of varied and rich tapestry, fringed with gold, sate Anne of Austria, the Queen Regent of France: splendid alike in the personal charms of full-blown matronly beauty, and in her rich and well-chosen attire.

As she turned to answer some remark from the young King of England, who, on the conclusion of the service, had quitted his own seat of state, and was now leaning in an attitude of profound admiration over the chair of the Regent-mother, the fair neck and queenly bust were displayed to the utmost advantage; and the courtiers, the foremost among whom was Mazarin, stood in admiration of the beauty which had captivated so many hearts, and which had failed, alas! to secure only that of her husband.

Opposite to her, under a similar canopy, emblazoned with the arms of Britain, and surrounded by a group whose mourning habits, and, for the most part, saddened countenances, presented a striking contrast to the brilliant circle of the French court, sate the widowed Queen of England.

Her countenance, paler than its wont, and rendered more so by the sable hue of her dress, had not, however, gained in interest what it had lost in beauty; for the bright dark eyes which had beamed with lustre when animated by queenly triumph and womanly pride, had now become expressionless. Incapable of deep emotion, the face was a true dial to the heart; and those deep readers of human nature who would trace a history in every countenance, had in vain sought vestiges of the anguish of the widowed wife, of the desolation of the forlorn mother, of the outraged majesty of the exiled Queen, in the meaningless expression, and wandering, through uninterested gaze, of Henrietta Maria.

She regarded her son with a gesture somewhat impatient, as she observed his prolonged conversation with the French Queen, which delayed the departure of the Royal party; for, according to etiquette, Anne of Austria alone could give the signal to move. At length the young King bowed and, gallantly kissing the hand of Anne, he left the nave.

“Our brother of England, madam,” said the Regent, turning to Henrietta, “hath, he doth

aver, offerings of much worth to present to us ere we leave the Church. If your Majesty be so disposed, we will await him here."

"Some new freak of Charles's," said Henrietta. "My son can have but little to offer worthy your Majesty's acceptance;—unless indeed he offered himself."

"For such a scheme, madam, we must await a dispensation from his Holiness," replied the Queen of France, smiling, however, at the implied tribute to her still indisputable attractions conveyed in this remark. "The wife of your Majesty's brother could hardly without it become the wife of your son; therefore, we would hope King Charles's present project be one which may be terminated without the intervention of an embassy to Rome. But here he is to answer for himself."

As the Queen spoke, Charles appeared from the transept of the Church, leading by the hand the Lady Katharine. She was dressed in bridal attire of white and silver; and her rich veil, fastened into her hair with the simple wreath of orange blossom, fell in graceful folds around her figure.

Spite of the august presence into which she was introduced, and the light gallantries spoken in her ear by the young Monarch who conducted her, the eyes of Katharine reverted fondly to the face of him who walked by her side; who, espoused in captivity and on the scaffold's verge, was now about to claim her as his bride in the presence, and from the hands, of his liege sovereign.

With a gravity and deliberation which were by no means common to him, and which accordingly had the effect of rivetting the attention of all present to the utmost, Charles advanced towards the French Queen.

"We promised your Majesty," he said, "a gift of no small value. Permit us to present to you a faithful and loyal subject, Albert, Comte d'Amville. On the proof of his well-tried allegiance to our Royal father, we venture to answer for his future devotion to your Highness"

At a sign from Charles, the young Count knelt at the feet of Anne of Austria, to offer homage.

"How!" exclaimed the Queen, "what mum-mery is this? King Charles, there exists not the man who can claim the title of Comte d'Amville. The late Countess had but one child, and she——kneels there."

Anne pointed as she spoke to the figure of Marguerite d'Amville, or Sister Cecile, as she was for the future to be called; who, still prostrate on the steps ascending to the choir, remained totally unconscious of the scene which was passing.

"Perdona, bellissima Regina," rejoined Charles, in the accents he knew the Queen loved best,—
"The late Countess Isabella had but one child by her second marriage, and that child, a daughter, born in Britain, inherited her lands, but not her title. The young Cavalier who now offers you his homage was the son of the Countess by her first marriage with the Earl of Glenboyne; and, born in France, comes now to claim his mother's title and estates."

The fair brow of Queen Anne contracted; and with a flush in which perplexity and anger were strangely blended, she turned towards Mazarin.

"My Lord Cardinal, methinks this business affects your Eminence at least as much as ourself. What this young Englishman claims, the Holy Church loses!"

The features of the Italian underwent no change at this appeal, and a slight compression

of the lip was all which indicated that any emotion beyond the common took possession of him.

With a smile full of sweeteess and suavity, he calmly replied,

“Proofs; most illustrious lady;—we want proofs.”

Albert again knelt before the Queen, and laid at her feet the manuscripts which have been so recently presented to our readers; together with the letter that we hope they may not altogether have forgotten, which had so strangely come into our hero's possession, and which afforded corroborative evidence as being written by an eye-witness.

Somewhat mollified by the gallantry with which this movement was made, Anne made sign to her attendants to raise the papers.

“Ha!” she said, “this writing we well know—it is that of our unhappy brother-in-law. Your Majesty will identify the characters,” she added, turning to Henrietta, to whom, at her signal, a page carried the papers. “But what have we here?” and she cursorily ran her eyes over the other manuscript—“a marriage—a murder—and,

by our Lady, the Cardinal de Richlieu. What! hath he dabbled in this plot too? My Lord Cardinal of Mazarin, your Eminence will decipher the manuscript, for we cannot."

"With your Majesty's leave," said Albert, "this narrative is the production of a Dominican monk—a creature of the late Cardinal de Richelieu, though a traitor even to *him*. It contains his account of the marriage of my mother—clandestine, through fear of the Lord Cardinal's vengeance—a vengeance too fatally wreaked upon my father."

The countenance of Anne changed from an expression of mortification to that of triumph. The interests of the Church, the haughtiness of the Queen, were alike forgotten, and all the hatred of the *woman* triumphed. "At last," she said, turning with a smile of peculiar meaning towards Mazarin, "the policy of Richelieu hath failed *here*."

At this moment the attention of every one present was arrested by an exclamation of dismay, which drew all eyes in the direction of the choir. It proceeded from the newly-professed nun, who, pale and motionless as a statue, was leaning against the gilded railing for support.

Her dark lashes almost rested on her cheeks as she bent her eyes fixedly upon some object which seemed to have caused her present consternation.

The Lady Katharine had on entering the church immediately sought her side, and raised her from the posture in which she had long been kneeling; and she now stood by her, her white hand resting upon Margaret's arm, enveloped as it was in the drapery of her dark mantle and hood.

The Lady Katharine's bridal veil—which concealed not the ever-varying emotions of a countenance in which love, and hope, and fear alternately brought and chased the colour, and which at the present moment, from the observation turned upon them, was tinged with a roseate blush,—mingled its airy folds with the cloistral veil, of which the heaviness added to the monumental effect of Margaret's figure; and, as they stood together, the Bride and the Nun, fitter emblems could not have been found to represent pure and enlightened *Faith*, and melancholy, withering *Superstition*.

It was on the hand of our heroine that the

looks of Margaret seemed to be fixed; and in reply to a question from the former, she pointed to the *ring*, with its pendant gem, which had never left Katharine's finger since the day of her espousal.

"Where—oh, where!—did you find this?" she said. But before Katharine could answer, Albert detaching himself in total forgetfulness of ceremony from the group which surrounded the Royal party, advanced hastily towards the two, and clasping the drooping girl in his arms, with an expression of bitter anguish he uttered the words,—

"My sister!"

She raised her eyes to his face sadly, but calmly.

"I knew it," she said: "I was sure of it,—something told me ever that you were my brother. But," and she looked down upon her newly-assumed robes, "even *you* must not embrace me now. Oh! Albert! Albert! why did you not tell me this before!"

"I knew it not, my poor child,—my lost, though newly-found treasure. But an hour since, I learned the truth from yonder papers. Nature

and instinct spoke to me, as to thee; but what were these against the world's belief and apparent fact! God be my witness, Margaret: to save thee from thy fate, I would freely lay down all which this day's revelations have proved to be my own. Oh! Margaret! Margaret!—is there no hope left?"

"None," she replied, with the calmness which had been but momentarily disturbed,—“and pity me not, my brother, nor think that I would exchange my lot for yours. Rather glory in your sister's high vocation, as she, in her turn, will, from time to time, rejoice to hear of your happiness. But before we part, Albert, that gem,—explain to me, how came it there? When last I saw it, my Confessor had it in possession.”

“And he, the cursed Dominican, used the stolen pledge as an instrument to further his vile tyranny over thee! By violence he acquired it from me, and at his death I recovered the token.”

“You forget,” said Margaret, in a less serious tone than she had yet spoken. “You have still to account for its place on the Lady Katharine Wentworth's finger.”

“Nay, my sister, thou hast divined the rest.

And now, love her, as thou wouldest love me."

"Long have I done so, Albert;" and the maidens tenderly embraced. Soon, however, disengaging herself, Margaret quietly detached from her dress the jewel which clasped it, and raising Katherine's hand, placed the two together. The rose and fleur-de-lis met in a wreath, encircling the letters C. P. W. as the jewels were clasped into one.

"It is all I have left in the world, my sister," said Margaret, "and it shall be your bridal gift."

At this juncture the King of England, who, along with his Royal compeers, had watched the scene with interest, and abstained from intrusion upon feelings which all held sacred, advanced towards the trio, and requested a view of the jewel which Katharine held. Its perfect coincidence with the description in the late King's papers of the gem presented to the Countess Isabelle was sufficiently obvious to Charles, and he lost no time in directing the observation of the Queens of England and France so this undeniable proof.

In another instant the gay young Monarch had

seized the hand of Katharine, and with a native grace he led her to the High Altar, brilliantly illuminated as it was with innumerable scenes, and hung with garlands of flowers. Even at that moment Charles could not bridle the light jest.

“Small thanks for our magnanimity, fair damsel, on this occasion ; for thou hast anticipated us, and bestowed thyself, ere we could bestow thee, upon this young Marquis. But, as we English say, the third time pays for all,—and when next thou dost contract the bands, mind, it is to ourselves. Remember Lilly, the astrologer !”

A less confiding or more superstitious nature than Katharine's might have found the words ominous. But they touched her ear, and sank not deeper in her thoughts. With a smile at their levity, she turned towards her lover, and in his look of fervent affection and manly sincerity, she read her best omen. And a long subsequent life of happiness proved it to be the true one.

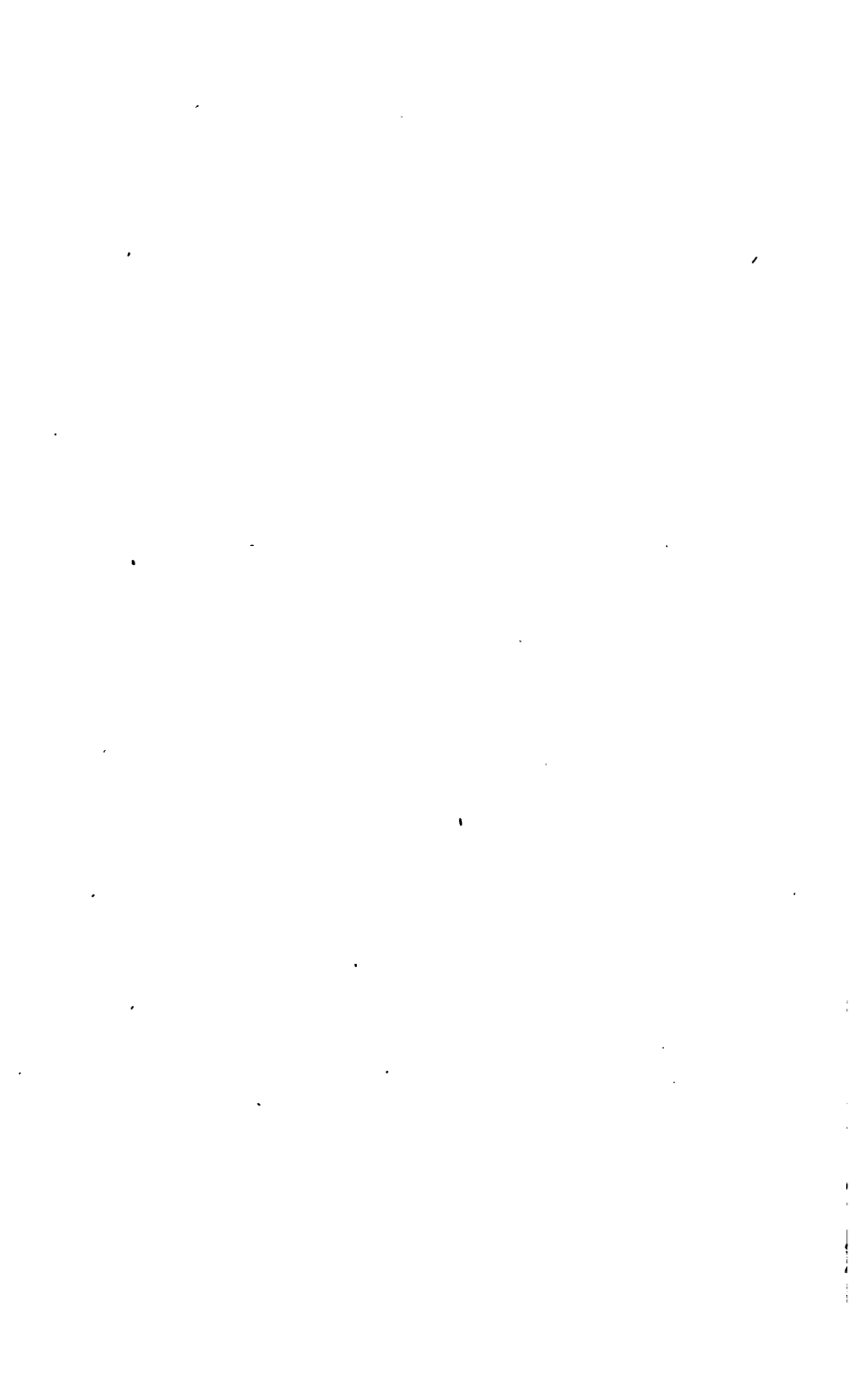
The Royal party formed a circle round the bride, chairs having been prepared for the Sovereign Princesses ; and Charles placed her hand in that of her affianced husband. The ceremony

(which Albert's foreign inheritance rendered necessary) proceeded, with all the gorgeous forms of the Roman Catholic ritual. At its close, the young bride knelt to kiss the hands, and receive the felicitations of Henrietta of England, and Anne of France.

"It is our pleasure," said the Queen Regent, as she rose to depart, "to hold this evening a Court at our Palace of the Louvre, for the presentation of the Comtesse d'Amville."

"And we," said Henrietta Maria, "bid all here present to St. Germain's for the morrow, where we purpose to celebrate a festival in honour of the nuptials of the Marquis and Marchioness of Gordon."

END OF VOL. III.



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